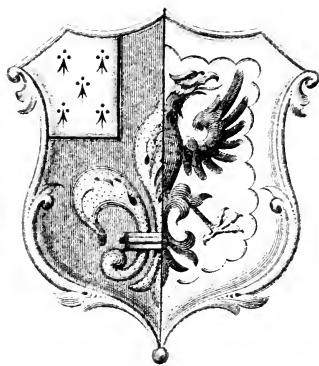




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Convien ch'arrivi a quel dubbioso calle ;
Al passar questa valle
Piacciavi porre gu' l'odio e lo sdegno,
Venti contrari alla vita serena,
E quel che in altrui pena
Tempo si perde, in qualche alto più degno
O di mano o d'ingegno
In qualche bella lode,
In qualche onesto studio si converta :
Così quaggiù si gode,
E la strada del ciel si trova aperta.

(CANZONE DI PETRARCA.)

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INTRODUCTION.

(1) THE following story is founded on facts related in the annals of Southern Italy, during that part of the thirteenth century when Charles of Anjou was invested with the sovereignty of Naples and Sicily, when Louis the 9th reigned in France, and Henry the 3rd in England.

This may be considered as a period of history replete with interesting occurrences, and memorable events. It may not improperly be termed the dawn of Europe's civilization; for it led the way to the splendid revival of arts and literature which graced the subsequent ages. It gave rise to many useful inventions, and produced some important discoveries: by that of the Mariner's Compass, for example, navigators became more enterprising, and communication with distant countries more easy.

If in the midst of these improvements new follies and errors were brought forward, it is to

be remembered that when the human mind, emerging from a state of ignorance, first takes wing, its flight is naturally more bold than steady, more lofty than well directed. Thus in the thirteenth century, while infant knowledge ventured to oppose deep-rooted prejudices, erroneous and daring fanaticism excited persecution and perpetuated intolerance: yet still the mild doctrines of true christianity diffused a ray of light from the writings of the wise and the feelings of the brave. Benevolent institutions were founded, universities were established; and while the spirit of monarchy wrestled with that of feudal aristocracy, the multitude began to experience in some countries, and to expect in others, the blessings of a paternal government and salutary laws.

The Crusades⁽²⁾ had contributed greatly to this civilization of Europe. Commenced from enthusiastic zeal, and, with few exceptions, continued by motives of interest and ambition, they were in the end productive of effects highly advantageous to society at large, as well as to individual character.

We may reckon the millions of lives and of treasure expended on these chivalrous pilgrimages; but similar calculations may be made with respect to other wars excited by the restless desire of conquest or commercial jealousy, from the beginning of the world to the present day, without being attended by similar consequences.

To that expansion of mind produced by visiting other countries, was added the necessary acquirement of various languages, as also an acquaintance with different modes of life, constant activity and watchfulness, excitement to noble actions, and contempt of danger.

Astronomy, algebra, and other branches of science, the received standards of taste, the Greek and Roman classics, chiefly preserved in the convents and monasteries of Greece and Asia, the courteous spirit of chivalry, the daring glance of philosophical enquiry, all these streams of light combined to pour their concentrated radiance from the Eastern to the Western world; for, although the Saracen Empire had crumbled into fragments, the usual fate of wide extended conquests, still the influence of its manners, its poetry, its arts, and its sciences, was felt in the countries where it had flourished, and was communicated to other nations. Even the hardy warriors of the North, once the terror of milder climes, when distinguished by the names of Vandals, Goths, and Cimbrians, learned to temper their ferocious courage with the arts of peace, and the comforts of social existence, while the nations who could boast of recollections were awakened as from a long and heavy sleep.

Italy, though incessantly harassed by civil discord and foreign invasion, had never sunk into a state of total barbarism, her splendour obscured, but not obliterated, could be discerned,

even through the dense and chilly mist of the darkest ages. Still possessing noble monuments of art, and reminiscences of ancient glory, her sons, yet bore in mind and person the stamp of their illustrious lineage; and, though divided into factions, unsupported by any regular system of government, and victims of the rival interests of strangers, they still maintained individually that station in which they seemed to be placed, as worthy inhabitants of the fairest portion of Europe.

(3) The Roman Pontiff, rendered more powerful than ever by the jarring interests of Princes seems to have had less influence in his own states than those of other Sovereigns. The Barons often disobeyed him in temporal concerns, and looked on themselves as independent Chiefs, at liberty to join any Monarch whose conduct and quarrel they approved. Whatever party had prevailed in the election of a Pope, its supporters considered themselves as his partisans rather than his subjects; and their antagonists never failed to oppose his measures.

For the general history of this period, however, we refer our readers to the distinguished authors who have ably performed their task, and who will not refuse us their permission to follow as humble gleaners, collecting a few wild flowers to strew over the graves of the last Crusaders.

SIR GUY DE LUSIGNAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE hermitage of Saint Angelo,⁽⁴⁾ situated on the declivity of a hill, was at no great distance from the noble city of Ampiglione. On one side it was concealed by a grove of elms, through which a winding path led to it from the road of Tivoli.

A small chapel, with two or three chambers within, the ruins of the once splendid Villa of a Roman Patrician, composed this secluded habitation, through the walls of which the evergreen oak thrust its vigorous branches where time had prepared an aperture.

The laurel grew spontaneously amidst the fragments of columns and other sculptured ornaments which the hand of rapine and the lapse of ages had not utterly destroyed. A group of lofty spreading pines and pointed cypresses arose behind the chapel; and the space before it formed a terrace whence the eye could discover a wide extent of plain, and trace for many miles the silvery current of the Teverone, or contemplate the lofty mountains of Sabina, and the various eminences on their rugged sides, crowned with populous cities and baronial castles. Between these appeared fertile valleys, and on the plain were seen the vestiges of the Claudian and Martian aqueducts sheltering from the summer sun innumerable flocks and herds, with here and there a shepherd employed in weaving baskets or other sedentary occupations. Many ancient tombs were still remaining near the road; and the whole prospect might well afford matter for meditation to a man versed in the history of the once great masters of the world, and who had experienced the vicissitudes of human life.

Such a man was Anselmo, evidently a native of Italy, but from what part of the country no one could tell; nor why he chose Saint Angelo for his retreat. He had passed some years there, and was considered as the oracle and father of the poor.

It was sometimes conjectured that Cardinal Cesarini, the Bishop of Tivoli, had known him in former times; but on the whole the respect with which that Prelate treated him, when they chanced to meet, was chiefly attributed to the general esteem which his character inspired. His features were regularly fine; his stature was commanding, and his eye quick and penetrating. His countenance was serious, but benignant; he appeared to be verging on that period of life when activity must yield to the languor of age, if not kept alive by continued exertion. Of this Anselmo was aware, and, as utility to others was the study and employment of his days, he unceasingly followed up the plan of duty which he had undertaken to perform.

His health seemed to derive advantage from these benevolent efforts. His step was firm, and his complexion indicative of peace of mind, and freedom from bodily suffering. He was indefatigable in his attendance on the sick and afflicted, instructed the young, and cheered the aged, restored concord to disunited families, and brought many back to the path of duty from which they had wandered. Above all he laboured to persuade men to be satisfied with their condition, or to endeavour to ameliorate it by their industry, without repining, feeding vain hopes, and aspiring to what providence had wisely placed beyond their reach. For this he would set before

their eyes the good and evil incidental to the various conditions of life; and, by so doing, he often taught them to rejoice at what they had before lamented, and to bestow compassion where they had felt envy.

He had much to conquer, and much to counteract, but he persevered; and, as far as his influence extended, the evils occasioned by the irregularity of the times, and the too great indulgence or capricious severity of the barons, were in a great measure done away.

Some of these powerful men encouraged their vassals in lawless depredations, and few were at that time sufficiently enlightened and conscientious to consider the advantage no less than the duty of attending to the morals and principles of the poor.

Anselmo was aided in his charitable toils by a man of middle age named Isidoro, who left his humble dwelling, a cottage in the neighbourhood, to cultivate the hermit's little garden, and to share his useful labours. They asked nothing of the rich, and it was supposed that Anselmo had resources for his own maintenance, and for the benefit of the indigent. If alms were offered for the latter purpose, he would point out those objects whom he thought most meritorious, but did not undertake to bestow what was tendered.

One evening, as seated on the capital of a column, which had been broken off, and was

placed near the steps leading to his chapel, he contemplated the serene brilliancy of a cloudless sky, he felt such delight in the pure and fragrant atmosphere, illuminated by the brightest moon, that, dismissing his companion to rest, he remained absorbed in grateful meditation, revolving in his mind the past events of his life, and the tranquil tenour of his present existence.

He had not been long in this situation when he observed a figure approaching with hurried steps on the road which led from Ampiglione to Tivoli, but soon concealed by the thick foliage which shaded the winding ascent to the hermitage. Anselmo listened and heard footsteps in that direction, which convinced him that a person was hastening towards him.

The hour was late, and the country infested with robbers ;⁽⁵⁾ but Saint Angelo offered little temptation to rapacity. A single altar, and a few flowers, the grateful tribute of the peasants, were the contents of the chapel, and Anselmo's apartments were furnished with what was barely necessary for an Anchorite. This tranquillizing reflection might have occurred to any one ; but our hermit had been a soldier ; he was a man of approved courage, and was not in a state of mind to entertain apprehensions of personal danger : he thought indeed that some lonely wanderer might have felt alarm, and was perhaps seeking refuge at the hermitage.

He had, however, scarcely time to form this conjecture before it was dismissed by the manly and graceful figure of Sir Guy de Lusignan, enveloped in his mantle, with the long feathers of his cap hanging wildly over his noble countenance, and with every mark of perturbation in his looks and gestures.

From what we have said of the occupation of Anselmo, it is not to be supposed that he associated with the gay and the rich; but Lusignan was scarcely to be considered of that number, though classed among them by the humbler inhabitants of Ampiglione and its neighbourhood, on account of his liberality and cheerful benevolence. The hermit felt for his dependant situation, which he knew to be painful to his high spirit and generous feelings, however softened by his almost filial attachment to Octavio Orsini, the chief of that illustrious family, and Lord of Ampiglione and its dependancies.

Gratitude also spoke in favour of the young warrior in the breast of Anselmo; for his timely interposition had saved the hermit's life, when attacked by banditti, as he was late one evening carrying medicines and clothing to a distant cottage.

On this occasion Sir Guy conceived the highest esteem for the man whom he defended; for this man of peace was displaying so much skill and intrepidity against the bold and dangerous

assailants who thought him the bearer of treasures, that his defender was astonished, and, as he had already learned to venerate his general character, he became, after this adventure, more anxious than ever to converse with him, and to learn his opinion on many subjects.

The visits of Sir Guy de Lusignan at the hermitage were however rather permitted than encouraged; for Anselmo, mild and indulgent to others, was severe to himself, and would not yield to the delight which he felt in the society of the young warrior. He had abandoned the world, not from disgust, but from imperious circumstances, which had driven him to his present asylum. He had, like other mortals, sought felicity on the troubled ocean of this transitory scene of existence. He had seen his hopes wrecked, his prospects blasted, and his dearest affections entombed with his fortunes. Years had matured his judgment, without blunting his feelings; but to lean once more for support and consolation on beings perishable like himself, would in his opinion have been losing the fruit of those awful lessons which he had received; and he therefore chose to render as disinterested as possible the discharge of his duty towards his fellow-creatures.

In his intercourse with the humble beings whom he assisted, the enlightened mind of Anselmo could fear no revival of past images; but

in the ardent expressions and elevated sentiments of Lusignan, he saw the visions of his youth restored: the magic colours once more glowed on his subdued fancy, recollections were awakened, and sensations felt which warned him to guard against the fond delusion: no wonder then if with mingled pain and pleasure he now beheld the knight hastily approaching him. Anxiety of mind and contending passions were visible in Lusignan's expressive countenance, and the hermit said to himself,—

“He is unhappy; he wants advice or consolation; and it would be cruel to let him meet with a repulse.”

The young knight threw himself on the steps of the rural chapel near the seat which the hermit, after a short salutation, resumed. They were silent for a few minutes, till at length the former exclaimed,—

“O, Anselmo! could months and years glide away as swiftly as yonder moon is hastening to the horizon, might I not hope to attain that tranquillity which I observe in thee? But no. Thou wert ever so: thy mind is of a purer temper than that of common mortals. Years have not extinguished in thee the sacred flame of benevolence, nor the ardent spirit of valour. Thou wert ever thus—firm, lofty, and polished, like the column which perpetuates the hero's fame amidst the storms of fate and the wreck of ages.”

“No, Lusignan! say rather like this ruined,—this shattered column on which I rest, the wreck of what I was,” said Anselmo, in a voice scarcely audible; but he raised it, and, in a tone less calm than usual, he continued,—

“I must not hear this rhapsody, these exaggerations. Such praises of a mortal, prone to error, and subject to misfortune like thyself, are almost impious.”

“Pardon me, Anselmo,” exclaimed Lusignan, “I would not offend thee, wretched as I am.”

“I am not easily offended,” replied the hermit, recovering his tranquillity; “but I have known affliction, and have not perhaps endured it as I ought: open thy heart to me, Lusignan! I see thou art unhappy. Has any one offended thee? I can feel for thee, but we must not be too fastidious, Lusignan; our pride will sometimes take offence at seeming neglect, when, if placed on higher ground, we should see only a trifle beneath our notice.”

“Alas! it is no trifle,” said the knight, “but I confess that my misery proceeds wholly from myself. Why should I be offended? It is madness, folly! I had forgotten my homeless, friendless, and unimportant existence—but I have been forcibly reminded of it, and shall forget it no more.”

“It is as I suspected,” said Anselmo; “but be composed, and let me hear what has happened.”

The young knight pointed to the battlements of Ampiglione, which were easily distinguished from the spot where he sat. "Look," said he, "Anselmo, at yonder turrets sparkling with torches. Hark! the symphony wafted by the rising breeze! Revels, joy, and triumph, reign at Ampiglione,—and I am miserable."

"Nay, my son," said the hermit, "this is not like Sir Guy de Lusignan. He was not wont to be wretched when others were happy. When good Octavio triumphs, why should his faithful warrior, his adopted son, refuse to take part in his rejoicing?"

"His son! O heavens!" exclaimed the young hero, while his ardent eyes filled with tears as he uttered the words.

Anselmo felt compassion for him, and, without appearing to notice the expression, repeated his request that he would tell him what had occurred.

Lusignan recovered apparent composure, and in a manner as indifferent as he could assume, he said—

"Andrea Manero,⁽⁶⁾ the artful and wealthy Lord of Saracinesco, sent, two days ago, a page to Ampiglione, announcing his intention of paying a visit to Octavio with his grandsons Pietro and Mario. A sumptuous banquet was prepared, and they arrived this morning proudly habited and attended. The motive of this visit was soon

revealed. Andrea came to solicit for these insolent youths the hand of Livia and that of Seraphina——”

“What said Octavio?” asked the hermit.

“Octavio at first received his guests with dignified courtesy, and treated them with his usual hospitality; but when the proposal was made, he did not appear to be flattered by it; at least I, who have been accustomed to read his thoughts in his open countenance, believed that he liked it not; but he gave no positive refusal. After the repast he desired me to accompany the youths into the park and shew them the aviaries (7) and the receptacle for wild beasts not more wild than they. Pietro admired the tyger more than the lion. “Why,” said he, “is this called the king of the beasts? Surely the tyger is more beautiful, and more swift: he can better seize his prey.” Remark, I pray thee, Anselmo, his notions of pre-eminence. Of course, I answered that the lion obtained the monarchy because he was generous as well as brave and strong. A contemptuous smile was all his reply. Mario said, “I should like to see the country whence all these curiosities are brought;” but Pietro checked him, saying, “I see no use in visiting foreign countries, or bringing things thence.”

“We returned to the castle, where I learned that a conference had taken place, and I remarked some change in the manner of Octavio. He was

become more confidential with Andrea Manero, took more notice of his grandsons, and pressed their stay with great urbanity. They readily consented to remain, and they are now revelling and rejoicing."

"And wherefore leave the gay assembly?" asked the hermit; "Will not the absence of Lusignan be remarked and considered as ill-timed?"

"I care not," answered the knight indignantly. "How could I stay to witness such degradation of the house of Orsini?"

"What degradation, my son?" said Anselmo, with a penetrating glance.

Lusignan reddened, and at first could not find a reply, at length he said,—“Is it not an indignity to propose two leaders of banditti for the daughters of the good, the noble Orsini?”

"Alas," said Anselmo, "few are the Barons that may not deserve that appellation, if we judge them severely. My countrymen have fiery spirits, but they have intellect. They may be hurried into acts of lawless violence, as they may sink into voluptuous indolence, but they are capable of all that is good and noble, when under the guidance of wise laws and animating example. What was Romulus? What was the population of yonder seven hills when first established there? Outlaws,—banditti; yet endowed with minds susceptible of the best instruction, and with hearts

open to the warmest social feelings. How soon these lawless robbers became models of public and private virtue!"

"The elder Manero has indeed a fearful name amongst the inhabitants of Sabina, but I have heard that his grandsire, who is prudent, endeavours to check and controul him : as to his brother Mario, though sometimes led astray by his affection for Pietro, he is naturally of a milder disposition. This, I believe, is the general opinion ; and methinks I have heard thee, Lusignan, speak of him with commendation."

"He is more odious to me than the insolent Pietro," replied the young knight, with great emotion.

"Ask thy own heart," said Anselmo, "that heart that is too generous to be unjust, why he is more odious to thee than Pietro ; and learn to divest thyself of personal feelings, dearest Lusignan, when called to pass judgment on the character of others. Hast thou forgotten in our former conversations thy wishes for Mario's improvement, and thy hopes that he might one day be led to better pursuits, and become an honour to his country?"

Lusignan hid his glowing cheeks in his mantle, and sighed deeply. It was long before he ventured to look up ; and when he did, it was with hesitation that he said,—

“I cannot speak. I should perhaps appear presumptuous, unjust, ungrateful. Indeed how could I expect Anselmo to listen on such a subject?”

“Lusignan!” said the hermit, “I can listen, though I may not approve—nay, listen with indulgence, if not with sympathy. We have all our warfare; and thou art advancing in the thorny path of life which I have trodden with a step perhaps less firm than thine.”

Encouraged by these words the young warrior no longer scrupled to communicate his inmost thoughts; but it is time we should lay before our readers a sketch of the country to which we have led them, and of its principal inhabitants.

CHAPTER II.

AMONG the many flourishing cities, (8) which in the thirteenth century, under the rule of bold and powerful Barons, adorned the Pontific States, one of the most considerable was Ampiglione, known in ancient history by the name of Empulum, and situated at no great distance from Tibur, now called Tivoli, on the road to Subiaco.

It was built by a colony descending from the mountains long before the foundation of Rome, and some years previous to the landing of Eneas on the coast of Latium. Proud of their origin and of the antiquity of their city, its numerous inhabitants had not less reason to be satisfied with the local advantages of their situation.

Ampiglione was seated on a rising ground in the midst of a delightful plain, and sheltered by the mountains of Sabina, while it was open to the

healthful sea breezes which refresh and invigorate the human frame. It was supplied with the purest water in luxurious abundance, and a brilliant verdure, enamelled with flowers, and shaded by the elm, the plane, and the ilex, characterised its beautiful environs.

Successive Chiefs of the noble house of Orsini had greatly enlarged and adorned this ancient city, which at the period when our history commences was renowned for its sumptuous edifices, its enchanting gardens, and above all for the splendor and urbanity with which the good (9) Octavio Orsini held his court in this his favourite residence. He had many amiable qualities, was of a generous temper, and had great personal bravery; but the excessive mildness of his nature rendered him unfit for the turbulent times in which he lived. He wanted energy of mind and decision of character; there was consequently a vacillation in his councils and resolutions injurious to his interests, and even disadvantageous to his fame.

This uncertainty proceeded less from the head than from the heart; it was easy to work on his feelings, when his reason was by no means convinced; for his understanding was far from contemptible, and his intentions were always pure and upright; but he often gave way where he ought to have been inflexible, and followed when he ought to have led.

The first wife of Octavio died young ; and left him only two daughters. As he fondly loved her he bitterly lamented her loss ; and to divert his grief he was not unwilling to listen to the entreaties of the then reigning Pontiff, who was anxious to send his noblest Barons to the Holy land.

Octavio assumed the badge of the Crusade with great solemnity in the Church of Saint John near the Lateran palace, and spared no expense for the equipment of his numerous dependants and vassals. He had great possessions, for the cities of Vicovaro, Cantalupo, and San Gregorio belonged to him, as well as Ampiglione with its fertile territory ; but his expenditure had always exceeded his income ; and, before he departed for Palestine, he, like many others, found himself under the necessity of borrowing a considerable sum of money ; with this he was supplied by Andrea Manero, the wealthy Lord of Saracinesco, on conditions highly profitable to the latter.

Orsini undertook the crusade with a zeal becoming the natural sincerity of his character. He was then young, was not insensible to the spirit of chivalry, and he conceived that such an expedition would perfect him in all those knightly accomplishments, which would prove him not unworthy of the race from which he sprang.

He left his infant daughters under the care of the widowed sister of Sinibaldo, a near relation of

their mother, to whom he entrusted the government of his States during his absence.

He remained during several years in Siria, and whenever he thought of returning to Europe was easily persuaded to defer his departure.

At length arrived news of the death of Sinibaldo, and Octavio felt the propriety of revisiting his States; but he dreaded to behold the scene of lost happiness, and was unwilling to leave a country to which he had become accustomed: he suffered month after month to elapse, and was still undecided, till his parental feelings were roused by letters informing him that Sinibaldo's sister had only survived him a few months, and that the daughters of Orsini were left without a protectress. This put an end to all delays; and he immediately sailed for Italy, bringing with him his few remaining followers, and the fame of a brave, liberal, and disinterested Champion of the Cross.

The first sight of his castle at Ampiglione occasioned many painful recollections, but the caresses of his daughters, the cordial expressions of attachment with which he was welcomed by his people, and the beauty of the country, restored him to a sense of happiness and domestic enjoyment: he wondered how he could have stayed so long away from such a paradise, and resolved to make amends for his protracted absence by attending to the comforts and improvement of his affectionate vassals.

He perceived that much good might be done ; and he was sincerely desirous of doing it ; but when he observed how much evil had been produced from the want of proper authority to repress violence and disorder since the death of Sinibaldo, he was mortified and discouraged.

He wished to live on terms of amity, if possible, with the neighbouring Barons, and he heard of nothing but disputes between his people and theirs. On his own estates he was anxious that no one should suffer from oppression or injustice ; and he was told of many instances of both too glaring to be overlooked, yet he hated punishments and coercion : he therefore soon forgave the offender, and forgot the offence, though at the first moment he always felt what was due to retributive justice.

In military affairs, which are always decided in a more summary way than civil proceedings, he had not been considered as a negligent, though an indulgent, commander. The time of action was that in which he shone. He shared the danger into which he led his soldiers ; and as he detested rapine and cruelty, he always recommended to them forbearance when the battle was over, and his example often kept his troops under a restraint which the strictest discipline could hardly have produced.

The case was now very different. The people of Ampiglione and its vicinity, pleased with the

generosity of their Prince, and captivated by his kindness, anticipated nothing but revels and gaiety. They concluded that every petition would be granted, and every fault passed over in silence. Within the circle to which the influence of Anselmo could extend few excesses were committed, but from many parts of Orsini's territory, complaints from the injured, and remonstrances from the oppressed, reached his ears, and were heard with pain and indignation. They were soon followed by intercessions and supplications in behalf of the accused ; compassion for the latter often prevailed ; and Octavio, still desirous to be just, would frequently at his own expense compensate the sufferer for his losses.

He visited every town and village belonging to him, and ordered his castles to be repaired and beautified. He hunted, he celebrated popular festivals, and his residence was constantly full of guests, yet still he felt a void : the place was not to him the same as he remembered it ; and, in this state of mind, his heart became easily accessible to the charms of Julia Sanseverino.

This Lady, who was of a noble family in the Neapolitan States, was only a few years older than Orsini's daughters. She was the niece of Sinibaldo, and after her mother's death, remained with her young friends for whom she appeared to entertain the most tender affection. This was a motive for deciding the choice of Octavio in her

favour, preferably to many other alliances, which might in various respects have proved more advantageous. Julia was by no means a suitable companion for Octavio. She was vain, artful, and positive; ready on all occasions to avail herself of the easiness of his temper, and determined to govern both him and his family with the most jealous and exclusive power.

In the year subsequent to her marriage she believed her empire to be permanently established by the birth of a son, and imagined that all things would be subservient to her wishes. Still, however, she professed a great affection for the daughters of Octavio, and he looked on himself as the happiest of men; for, although he could not find in Julia's disposition that sympathy which constituted the charm of his first union, he was pleased with her attractions, looked with rapture on his infant son, and anticipated many revolving years of domestic felicity.

Julia appeared most partial to Livia, the eldest of the sisters, whose character, she said, was congenial to her own, but Livia, though of a lofty spirit impatient of controul, had a mind little resembling that of Julia. She had far more discernment, a better understanding, and a firmness of temper which was sometimes imprudent, but always honourable. Julia feared, and therefore courted, her in the hope of gaining her suffrage and support in the endeavour of securing her ascendancy over Orsini and his family.

As to Seraphina, the younger sister, Julia had been accustomed to consider her as a gentle, obedient, and unobtrusive being, but she had no hope of engaging her to join in any scheme ; and she had no apprehensions of her opposing, or even discovering it. Julia knew not how to distinguish the mild equanimity which proceeds from a sense of duty in a well regulated mind from the constitutional apathy of indifference, so often erroneously called sweetness of temper : she therefore knew not the real character of Seraphina, whose heart was too kind to oppose the views of others where only her own gratification was concerned, and whose mind was too firm and well directed to give way when truth and principle were endangered.

The child only lived a few months ; and the disappointment of Julia was not alleviated by the birth of another. Octavio felt acutely the loss of his son ; but he was soon called away from Ampiglione to command the troops sent from Rome, to support Charles of Anjou in his contest with the house of Swabia, for the kingdom of Naples, a contest which was now tending to its final decision, for Charles, who was Count of Provence and brother to Lewis the Ninth, then King of France, had been invested by the Pope with the dignities of Senator of Rome, Vicar General of the Empire, and King of the two Sicilies, in opposition to the claims of young Conradine, son of

the deceased Emperor, Frederick the Second, the declared enemy of the Papal power.

Octavio took a tender leave of the disconsolate Julia and of his daughters; and joined the army, accompanied by Sir Guy de Lusignan, the young knight whom we have just left at the hermitage, and who had come with him from Palestine. The conduct of Octavio in that country had gained him the esteem and regard of the best and bravest among the Crusaders, while his social and benevolent temper had secured him many friends. Even Aymar de Lusignan, a man of singular merit and acquirements, but of retired habits, conceived so favourable an opinion of Orsini that he joined his banner, when driven from his peaceful home near Damascus.

This Aymar (10) was nearly related to Hugo, king of Cyprus, and titular sovereign of Jerusalem. He had sold his patrimony in France, and purchased a small estate in Siria, where he passed his time in study, and attending to the education of the young Guy de Lusignan, whose mother he had lost a few hours after the birth of her son.

When the Sultan of Damascus abandoned the cause of the Crusaders, which he had promised to support against Benducar, Sultan of Egypt, Aymar was obliged to quit a territory become hostile to the Christians; and he became involved in the subsequent war; which was neither in unison with his modes of life, nor suited to the

weakness of his constitution. He was not however forgetful of the race from which he sprang; and having lived a philosopher, died a soldier, fighting bravely with Orsini and his brethren in arms in an action which took place not far from Antioch.

Young Lusignan was in this action. He was scarcely seventeen years of age, and received a severe wound in the fruitless attempt to defend the falling Aymar. Octavio perceived the danger and flew to his succour; but only arrived in time to hear the last words of his friend "Generous Orsini! take care of this orphan——"

The youth recovered in a short time and became the constant companion of Octavio, who remained two years longer in the East; during which period young Lusignan became so highly celebrated for his gallant actions, that he obtained among the Crusaders the appellation of Fortebraccio.

At the same time this young orphan was not less remarkable for genius and talent than for military prowess. Aymar had taught him various languages of which he was himself master, the history of ancient times, and the sciences then cultivated in the East; but he had given little encouragement to his taste for poetry and music. With an ardent imagination and a heart susceptible of the deepest impressions, added to an ear quick and correct, and a voice equally powerful

and harmonious. Fortebraccio seemed born to be a Troubadour; but Aymar checked his early passion for the *gay science*, wishing to strengthen his mind by more severe studies, and to prepare him by more important pursuits for the difficulties which were likely to be his portion in life.

Aymar had one brother, Philip de Lusignan, a Benedictine Monk in the Abbey of St. Victor at Marseilles, who, though the elder, had preferred the life of a cloister, and had given up to his brother the paternal inheritance, which had never been great, and was reduced to a trifling amount by the circumstances which we have mentioned. The youth wrote to Philip to inform him of his loss; and also communicated the sad event to Porcellet, an old and approved friend of Aymar in Provence, the only two persons in his native country with whom he had kept up any correspondence.

Philip answered and advised Lusignan to remain for the present with Orsini. He therefore felt himself justified in pursuing the course which he had commenced and in which he soon acquired a fame superior to his years.

He wrote again to Philip, and told him that having often urged his father to give him a distinct account of his family, he had always answered that in time he should know more, that he was then too young; but that he referred him, in

case of his death, to papers in the possession of his brother at the Abbey of St. Victor.

To this second letter he received no answer ; but he continued to write and make enquiries of the knights who arrived from Provence. Porcellet was dead, but Philip, he had every reason to believe still lived. Some said that they had seen him, others that no such person was known at Marseilles, and many, who promised to obtain intelligence, thought of it no more.

At length Octavio sailed for Italy, and took with him Sir Guy de Lusignan, who formed a plan of visiting Provence as soon as possible : but time passed rapidly away ; first in festivities, and in the domestic circle of the castle, and afterwards in the expedition to Abruzzo, where the armies met, and victory decided in favour of Charles of Anjou. The battle which took place near the lake of Celano gave Lusignan occasion for the acquirement of fresh laurels ; and he did ample justice to the confidence placed in him by Orsini.

Conradine (11) was taken prisoner and his army defeated, the cause of the Guelphs triumphed over that of the Ghibelines, and Octavio, satisfied with having done his duty, though little elated by a victory of which he foresaw the cruel consequences, withdrew his forces, and once more sought his home, resolving to avoid all future participations in the contests of rival Princes.

This resolution was more easy to form than to maintain. After an absence of considerable duration, he found that the jealousy of the Barons of the Ghibeline party was increased in proportion with the services which he had rendered to the Pontiff and the Guelphs. Among these the most powerful at that time were Sciarra Colonna and Alessandro Mapimo, the Lords of Palestrina and San Vito.

Massimo was naturally of a violent and irascible temper; ambition was his ruling passion; but he was frank and high minded. He conceived that he had cause of complaint against the house of Orsini, and the Lady Beatrice, his wife, was a Colonna, the aunt of Sciarra.

The haughty and warlike (12) Lord of Palestrina was respected and feared throughout Italy. Even the Pontiff, his Sovereign, contemplated his bold and powerful measures with an attention bordering on terror. His name was renowned in Europe, and the daring spirits of his native country looked up to him as their leader.

Andrea Manero, to whom belonged the castles of Saracinesco and Sambuci with their dependences, was of a cautious, calculating disposition: he was rich, and possessed great influence in the country, appearing to take no decisive part in the troubles excited by the different factions; and was therefore courted rather than esteemed by Guelphs and Ghibelines.

Of a very different character from all these was Cardinal Cesarini, the Bishop of Tivoli, a man no less beloved for his conciliating temper than respected for his virtues and dignified simplicity of manners. His life was spent in endeavours to suppress, or at least to soften, the animosity subsisting between the neighbouring chiefs, and to render them at once more attached to their country and more respectful to their sovereign. On the other hand he omitted no opportunity of representing to the Pontiff how little temporal ambition and political intrigue appeared to him becoming the head of a church founded on humility and truth; and this he would do in a manner at once so forcible and so modest that no offence could be taken, even when his counsels were not adopted to the extent that he wished.

CHAPTER III.

WE must now return to Saint Angelo, where Anselmo, after taking Lusignan into his cell, desired him to sit down opposite to him at a little table, on which a lamp was burning, and listened attentively to what he had to say.

The young knight still felt some embarrassment, but he collected himself, and said :

“ Perhaps there may be a false pride attached to situations like mine, and it may lead me into error : four years have elapsed since I came hither with Octavio Orsini from Siria,—an orphan, it is true, but not a nameless one, the son of his friend and the partaker of his toils. His marriage with the Lady Julia took place, as thou knowest, shortly after our arrival, and I was treated by her with kindness and confidence during the time we

passed in this country before we joined the army in Abruzzo ; but on our return I remarked that she received me coldly, and more as a stranger than a friend. Since that time she has continued to treat me with a mixture of suspicion and disdain ; neither of which it is in my nature to endure. Orsini is always the same ; but it is painful not to be allowed to love all those who are near and dear to him.”

Here Lusignan paused, but in a few moments he continued. “This is painful, Anselmo ; but far more painful is the conflict with myself. O ! I have long sustained it, and it has been an arduous conflict. The events of this day must end it. They have driven me to despair—to distraction.—But I understand that look, Anselmo !—I will be calm and pursue my story.

“Seraphina was a child when we arrived in Italy, scarcely thirteen years of age, and her sister only a year older. Octavio was enchanted with their innocent gaiety, and not less proud of their talents than of their uncommon beauty. They both loved poetry, music, and all the arts that soften and embellish life. These were not pursuits to which Orsini had paid much attention in early life ; for war had been his only study ; but in Siria he in some measure learned their value ; and he wished his daughters to excel in all they did. He encouraged me to join in many of their occupations, and how could I refuse his request ?”

To this question the hermit made no reply. It is probable he thought the good Octavio had forgotten Lusignan was not the brother of his daughters. He only however made a sign that he should pursue his narrative.

“The two sisters,” said Sir Guy, “appeared to vie with each other in application ; but the chief object with Seraphina was to please her father, and to manifest her gratitude towards those who were her instructors ; while that of Livia seemed to be the acquirement of a superiority over her sex, or perhaps the ambition of rendering the name of Orsini as distinguished in her person as in the martial achievements of her progenitors. Such at least was my opinion, when I compared her with her unassuming sister, though had I been accustomed to see her beside any other, I might have thought her perfect.—Happy hours ! happy weeks and months, that passed like hours, like moments, while all was youth, and happiness, and thoughtless hilarity !

“The death of Orsini’s infant son cast the first gloom over the towers of Ampiglione, and since our return from the Neapolitan States, Julia interrupts or watches our peaceful studies. No look of mine or of Seraphina escapes her notice, and joy, and hope, and confidence are fled.”

“Surely, Lusignan,” said the hermit gravely, “thou hast not sought to gain, without Orsini’s consent, the affections of the Lady Seraphina ?”

“Who seeks to gain affections?” said Lusignan with impetuosity, “are they not the spontaneous emanation of the purest flame of nature? are they to be excited or extinguished by artifice or labour?”

“They may be repressed, my son,” returned the hermit, “they may be kept within their just limits, and not be suffered to blaze forth when the honour and happiness of those whom we love and respect require their subjugation. Nay, when our own honour imperiously demands it.”

After a few minutes of reflection, Lusignan said more calmly, “No, my friend, I have not to reproach myself with conduct unworthy of the son of Aymar, and the friend of Octavio: surmise is all that Julia can have against me; and as to Seraphina, compassion, sympathy perhaps—but I have no right to say so, may have caused her still to cherish the remembrance of our early friendship.—All is now over—I know her filial piety, her strict and truly feminine obedience to the voice of duty and propriety. She will obey, and Mario will be accepted.”

“And Livia? Will she accept the hand of Pietro Manero?” enquired the hermit.

“It may be that she will resist,” answered Sir Guy. “I have reason to think she likes him not, and yet it appears strange to me that Julia should encourage and urge the suit of Manero without her concurrence.”

“ Listen attentively to what I have to say, my dear Lusignan,” said the hermit, “ and be not surprised that a man retired from the world should offer his remarks on the present state of things, and on the characters of those with whom he has no personal intercourse. I love this country, and I feel a tender interest in the concerns of those on whom its prosperity depends. I lament the dissensions which subsist between the rival Barons, and I wish they could at least be mitigated ; but I see little prospect of such a blessing, though we boast of belonging to a religion of peace, and love, and mutual forbearance.

“ Octavio is, I doubt not, sincere in these principles, but he is by turns too warm and too pliant. They who approach him merely see his virtues, and to them he is deservedly dear, but the artful and the interested take advantage to his prejudice of his good qualities no less than of his defects. Manero has wealth, power, and influence ; he has kept himself independent of party, and his alliance may be considered as eligible in many points of view.”

“ Very possibly,” interrupted Sir Guy. “ I confess that I understand little of these calculations. This I know, that Orsini would be miserable if he saw his daughters unhappy with those to whom he had sacrificed them.”

“ I wish him to take time for consideration,” replied Anselmo, “ and to know more of the

temper and real character of the grandsons of Manero before he gives his consent ; but it must be remembered that he has hereditary enemies, jealous neighbours, and hostile partizans of the Swabian cause, who would willingly seize the first opportunity of attacking him and his states. Octavio is responsible for the safety and happiness of those committed to his charge, and we must recollect, Fortebraccio, that our duties are in this world—our reward in the next.”

Lusignan gazed on the hermit with some astonishment ; but he felt the truth of what he said, and assented to it, adding,—“ With these sentiments, Anselmo, and this information respecting public affairs, how comes it that I see thee the hermit of Saint Angelo ?”

“ Ask not the pelican, seated on the lonely rock, why she watches the flight of summer birds,” returned the hermit, with a mournful expression of countenance, which soon gave way to a faint smile. Lusignan urged him no farther on a subject which he had often wished to investigate, but perceived that it was at least not the proper moment to gratify his curiosity, and he only said,—

“ Anselmo ! no doubt you are better informed and have more experience than has fallen to my share. I can scarcely see the necessity of Orsini’s strengthening himself with alliances, when he might easily maintain his independence by measures equally vigorous and conciliatory.”

“Such would unquestionably be the case,” replied Anselmo, “if he possessed firmness of temper equal to the goodness of his heart. However, Lusignan, we may reason for ever on the duties of others without much advantage to ourselves. Is it not more important to consider what should be thy line of conduct in the present instance? He may have committed himself already in some degree; and thou art too noble to take advantage of the kindness of his nature, supposing that he might be induced from affection for thee and his daughter to change what he this day may have granted.”

Lusignan could not speak. His heart was rent by contending emotions. The hermit perceived it and said,—“I feel for thee, my son; the sacrifice is great, but that of duty and peace of mind is greater.”

“I have, alas! no sacrifice to make,” answered Lusignan: “Seraphina cannot be obtained on such conditions. I well know the path which she will pursue.”

Saying this he started up, paced the cell for a few minutes, and then, as if a sudden thought had struck him,—“Anselmo,” he cried, “I thank heaven that I have duties to call me hence;—duties too long neglected. I will depart for Provence, and seek out Philip de Lusignan: should he be no more, I may at least discover some traces of my father’s family, they cannot be

wholly obliterated, and I have often reproached myself for my neglect : but all my thoughts and wishes were centered in Ampiglione."

"This self-condemnation is useless," replied the hermit, "and perhaps unjust. To have left the banner of Orsini before the conclusion of the war would have been wrong. Now indeed it may be well to carry thy resolution into effect. Weigh it, however, thoroughly ; reflect on our conversation, and return to the castle : there join in the festivities that may be appointed for to-morrow ; and, above all, beware of insulting the guests of Orsini by sharp discussion or too distant coldness, be their sentiments or opinions what they may. Let me see thee again before thy departure ; and now take my blessing, and hasten back to Ampiglione.

The heart of Lusignan rebelled against the cool reasoning of the hermit. He would fain have dwelt longer on a theme in which he took so lively an interest ; but Anselmo would evidently hear no more, and he was obliged to depart, after promising that he would revisit the hermitage before his departure for Provence.

CHAPTER IV.

THE moon had sunk beneath the horizon, and the lights on the battlements of Ampiglione were partially extinguished before Sir Guy approached the walls. He became convinced that the hour was much later than he had imagined, and the surprise of the sentinels, when they recognized him and let down the drawbridge, brought him to reflect on the sensation which his absence must have produced in Orsini and the family. "Yet, who knows," thought he, "whether I have been missed? I am a stranger."

Engrossed by melancholy ideas he reached the inner court of the castle, where he met Fabio, the Secretary of Orsini, who was crossing it to arrive at the turret where he slept. Lusignan stopped him, and learned that the evening had passed in festivity, that Julia was in excellent spirits, and that

Andrea Manero had been for some time in close conference with Octavio ; that the young ladies had unwillingly been suffered to retire after the conclusion of the evening banquet at the desire of Livia, who appeared greatly discomposed ; but that the young Lords Pietro and Mario were highly elated by the cordiality with which they were treated by Octavio.

To all this the Secretary added that it was the general opinion in the castle that the proposal of Manero had been favorably received, and that arrangements would shortly be made for the celebration of the nuptials. He then enlarged on the preparations making for the ensuing day, and on those which he anticipated. He expatiated on the riches and splendid appearance of the Manero family, confessed that some people said the young Lord Pietro had a haughty demeanour ; but that, for his part, he thought it became him, as he was so tall and handsome, though rather dark ; and he declared that, as far as he could judge, never were bride and bridegroom better suited than the Lady Seraphina and the Lord Mario.

To these remarks, as may easily be imagined, Lusignan made no reply. Fabio told him that he seemed lost in thought, and that he supposed he was beginning to compose an epithalamium, complimenting him on his talent for poetry. He next lamented that his own task, which he con-

cluded would be that of drawing up the marriage contracts, must be very dry in comparison with the flights of fancy to be expected from a gallant Troubadour; and at length, having thus coolly and perhaps unintentionally planted daggers in the heart of Lusignan, he departed, wishing him a good night and agreeable dreams.

In the temper of mind which was at that moment the miserable lot of the high spirited Sir Guy de Lusignan, the bitter taunts of a declared enemy would have been less grievous than these common place observations of the Secretary.

There are beings in the world who neither feel nor comprehend any thing beyond exterior appearances; who follow a beaten track until drawn from it into another, without enquiring which was right, or which was wrong; whose conception of happiness goes no farther than ease, health, and wealth; who are habitually cautious not to commit themselves, in what they think essential: but who never watch the countenance of any but their patron, to judge whether what they communicate makes the hearer happy or miserable; yet who perfectly know how to dress their face in smiles or in tears, as their person in embroidery or in sables, when a nuptial or a funeral ceremony requires their attendance.

These men are punctual to stated hours, and observant of stated customs. They neither exceed or fall short of their instructions in the literal

sense of the words ; for their aim is not the success of the commission with which they are entrusted, but security from personal blame. They are obsequious to all whom they suppose to be in favor ; but if they conceive them to be in the wane, they begin to discover in them failings which they never before suspected.

Such was Fabio : and in the common course of events we may suppose that Lusignan looked on him with perfect indifference : but we cannot wonder if his indignation was roused by the familiarity of remarks from such a person and on such a subject. He repeated to himself the words “ Gallant Troubadour,” adding mentally, “ I see in what light I am held : a wandering minstrel, a soldier of fortune, who ought to esteem himself too happy when he is permitted to share the banquet prepared by Orsini for the potent barons, who may aspire to the hand of his daughters !—and this formal slave, become insolent with reveling, wishes me a good night, and, sends me quietly to rest—to rest ! How easy to pronounce these words ! How difficult to attain their import ! Rest has never been my portion ; nor will it ever be until this throbbing pulse shall cease to beat, and this glowing bosom shall become chilled and lifeless in the silent grave.”

One of the gates which led to the gardens, was left open, and, as Lusignan entered he found the

good old Bartolomeo, who was the principal gardener, seated on a stone bench, half asleep, but at the Knight's approach, he started up, and welcomed him cordially. "Sir Guy de Lusignan," said he, "I would not close this gate; for I know you like to pass by the terrace to your apartments. You are not apt to be out so late; and I was fearful that some mischief might have happened to you in these riotous times."

"Pardon me, my friend," said Lusignan, "I was detained at the hermitage; I am sorry that I have kept thee waiting, and disturbed thy rest."

"Rest indeed!" returned Bartolomeo, "who can rest since this noisy crew has poured down upon us from the mountains? You did me a pleasure by keeping me up to watch for you in this quiet place, and in the free air. The wild fellows belonging to Sir Pietro Manero have done more harm at Ampiglione, and made more noise than all the Saracens whose bones are piled up in the caves of Saint Cosimato. ⁽¹³⁾ Then they understand as little of flowers as they do of manners, and they hardly know one tree from another. Did they not tell me that a tree was good for nothing if you could not hew a bow and arrow, and a lance out of it? As to flowers, they said they were only fit to be trodden down in churches; and I told them that I believed they had never been in a church till they came to Ampiglione. I was vexed, Sir Guy; for you know what a time I spent late

at night and early in the morning to dress out the great church with garlands and crowns ; and how you helped me too in sorting the rose leaves, and the myrtle leaves, and the blue and yellow flowers to make the fine mosaic pavement ⁽¹⁴⁾ which the Lady Seraphina said was the most beautiful she ever beheld, and you know that the guests only stalked in, and turned round, and stalked out again, and spoiled all the mosaic without even casting a glance at it. The old lord, to be sure, smiled and said it was all in great order ; but I thought he minded the gold and silver plate, and the Damascus hangings more than all the flowers. I hope it is not true that the wild young Lords are to marry my young ladies : for I am sure I should not have the heart to dress up the church, or the chapel, for such weddings.”

This innocent complaint of Bartolomeo however tiresome it might have seemed to an indifferent person, sympathized so perfectly with the irritable feelings of Lusignan that, after cordially wishing him a good night, he said to himself, “ this worthy man has more good sense than all the other inhabitants of the castle.”

The gardener locked the gate and retired contentedly to his bed, being assured that all must be safe when Fortebraccio was within the walls.

The young knight was indeed a general favorite, on account of the open cheerfulness of his disposition, his liberality, and the fame of his ex-

plots : but Bartolomeo went still farther ; for he had settled it in his mind that Sir Guy would be the most proper person in the world for the Lady Seraphina to marry ; and of this he had been convinced, as of an event equally probable and expedient, ever since he had observed an exchange made between them of a sprig of myrtle for one of laurel. He not only saw the former gratefully received by the lady, who gave in return the warrior's meed ; but many days after this occurrence he observed it in her apartment when he brought her fresh flowers, and he remarked it the more, as she came in great haste from the adjoining room to prevent his throwing it away.

This little anecdote he wisely kept to himself with a sense of propriety, not always to be found in shrewd observers, but old Bartolomeo had a kind heart and a sound judgment, which prompted him to forbear revealing what he saw, even to his favourite Lusignan, however he might have paid his court to him by so doing.

The night was calm, and the stars were in all their splendour. Lusignan felt no inclination to leave the gardens. He wandered through the various walks, visited and revisited every spot endeared to his recollections, alas ! too pleasing for his present determination. He began to feel his heart subdued and softened by the tender remembrances. The agitation and irritability with which he had entered the city, gave way to a

gentle melancholy, and, though not more happy, he was more composed.

There was a pavilion, in which Octavio often passed the summer evenings with his family. It stood in the midst of a grove, and was nearly covered by jessamine and myrtle: the door stood open, and on a marble table in the centre, Sir Guy perceived the lute on which he had so often accompanied the sisters as they sung. He took it up; and touching the strings, he fell naturally into a train of thought, which produced a plaintive melody. He forgot the indignation raised in his breast by Fabio's allusion to minstrelsy, and, yielding to the impulse which, in these happy climes, seems to inspire extempore song, as the chords obeyed his touch, his thoughts arrayed themselves into the following simple stanzas:—

How blest the crusader whose warfare is past,
 Who no longer is destined to roam,
 When the coast is in sight, when the anchor is cast,
 And he springs to a welcome at home.

He tells of the desert, of infidels rude,
 Of ocean, its billows, and foam;
 Of the toils he endured, of the perils subdued,
 And he fondly is welcomed at home.

But wretched is he, if, his pilgrimage o'er,
 If, returning from Palestine's dome,
 When the anchor is cast, when he leaps on the shore,
 And he finds neither welcome nor home.

Once more he embarks on the wild troubled wave,
Once more through the desert to roam ;
Till wearied, exhausted, he sinks to the grave,
His only terrestrial home.

Yet weep not ye friends who have cherished his youth ;
For he fears neither spectre nor gnome ;
If he manfully fight for the banner of truth,
Eternity welcomes him home.

As Lusignan finished this stanza he observed the dawn beginning to enlighten the eastern horizon. He replaced the lute on the table ; and, leaving the pavilion, he walked slowly towards the terrace, inhaled the fragrance of the morning, and looked around at the lovely prospect, which gradually became more clear and brilliant.

He sighed, and pursuing the reflections which had suggested his song, he said to himself,—“Art thou not my home, beloved, enchanting Italy ? Art thou not the home of my adoption, and of my choice ? What can I compare with thee ? Siria is my native soil ; her burning sands have nurtured this ardent, this impatient spirit. France—the birth-place of my ancestors—I have been taught to love thy fair extensive plains, and the cheerful gaiety of the inhabitants ; but here, only here, can this agitated bosom repose in peace, or breathe in freedom. Methinks I am here surrounded by the sacred shades of the great and

good: the very atmosphere seems impregnated with all that is heroic and sublime; all that is lovely and attractive. And can I leave this paradise? Seraphina—Octavio—good Octavio! My friend! My second father! The friend of Aymar! Why should I leave thee? Can I not command this rebel heart?"

Thus undecided he entered his chamber, and threw himself on his couch: he could not sleep, but the time was not spent in vain; he recollected what Anselmo had said; he recalled to mind other conversations relative to the state of affairs, which convinced him that this extraordinary man was well informed of all, and judged prudently, he saw the necessity of securing to Octavio the means of consolidating his power, strengthening his interest, and increasing the number of his partizans; for, partial as he was to him, he could not but own to himself that his want of firmness exposed him to considerable danger. Yet he could not conquer his repugnance to the present arrangements, independent of his personal feelings. He also remarked, with satisfaction, that the hermit had expressed a hope that Octavio might not be too hasty in complying with the proposal.

While engaged in these reflections, a page, sent by Octavio, entered his chamber, and said that his Lord wished to speak with him. He instantly obeyed the summons, and hastened to

Orsini's apartment. As he was ascending the steps which led to it, he met Livia and Seraphina with Vincenza, formerly their nurse, and now their faithful attendant. They were going, covered by their veils, to early prayer, and Lusignan stopped, incapable of speaking. They passed on, and he could only hear a sigh from Seraphina, as she bowed her head without raising her eyelids. Livia whispered to him as she raised her veil for an instant,—“Sir Guy, as you are going to my father, you may tell him that Saracinesco shall never be *my home*.”

These two last words were pronounced with an emphasis, which convinced him that she had heard his extempore song, and he repented of having given way to the impression of the moment in the pavilion, which had at least betrayed his discontent.

He entered Orsini's apartment in a frame of mind very different from that which he had been accustomed to experience on approaching him: Octavio, however, was too much engrossed by the subject which then occupied his thoughts, to observe the embarrassment of Lusignan; and, when he enquired the cause of his absence on the preceding evening, appeared satisfied with a very slight apology, and required no further explanation. The reason of this was that Octavio was himself embarrassed; he had always wished to unite Sir Guy with one of his daughters, and,

though he had never openly manifested this intention, he felt as if he were doing him injustice by relinquishing the design. He was unfortunately but too apt to give up his own views, which were often wise, and always honourable, to forward those of others, and was afterwards obliged to find reasons for what he had done from persuasion.

It was happy for Lusignan that he had not exactly known the intentions of Octavio; but he had formed conjectures of them, which heightened his disappointment, though he had not hinted them even to Anselmo.

Octavio now entered at some length into the motives which induced him to encourage the suit of Manero in favour of his grandsons, and added, that amongst the neighbouring Barons he knew none whose alliance was more eligible. With respect to the happiness of his daughters, he said, his only solicitude was founded on the many reports which he had heard to the disadvantage of Pietro, but that he had every reason to believe they were ill-founded. Julia, he continued, was peculiarly partial to Livia, and had therefore taken great pains to investigate how far these reports were to be credited. In short, he was satisfied that all would go well. Livia had talents and attractions to secure the affections of Pietro, and her lofty spirit was not unsuitable to that which he possessed.

Here Lusignan felt himself, in honour, obliged to make an answer, though he had some difficulty in wording it. He asked Orsini whether he was sure that the Lady Livia would obey his commands, as he had heard her express a marked dislike of inhabiting Saracinesco.

“Livia,” replied Orsini, “may at first treat the proposal with indifference; but I have little doubt of the influence which the wise and affectionate counsels of Julia will have over her ultimate decision. You know me well enough, my dear Lusignan, to be assured that I have no wish to force the inclinations of my children. As to Seraphina, she has often assured me that she has no will but mine. I trust she will be happy; for I have long heard of Mario’s attachment to her, though he has had few opportunities of seeing her. She has spoken with approbation of some noble and humane actions attributed to him, which have been related to her; and I have therefore made no scruple of promising her hand to him. He will be Lord of Sambuci, which, with the adjoining territory, will render him independent of Pietro, who is to succeed his grandfather in the principal possessions of the house of Manero.”

Orsini had now said enough to decide the long enduring Fortebraccio as to the line of conduct which he had to pursue. When he told the hermit that Livia liked not Pietro Manero, he

had reasons for the assertion, which he could not explain. He had observed in her a partiality, with which he was not gratified, because he could not return it. He was superior to vanity, and his affections were devoted to her sister. These affections, he had hoped, might be reciprocal, and sanctioned by Octavio; but the hope had never amounted to certainty. At all events his path was now traced;—it was that of duty and propriety. He could neither bear to witness the marriage of the younger sister, nor be a cause of impeding that of the elder, whom he esteemed and admired, though his tenderness exclusively had Seraphina for its object. Far from being ungrateful on quitting Orsini, he thought that he should render him a service of importance by absenting himself, and removing, as far as was in his power, all obstacles to the desired arrangements.

He, however, observed to Octavio, with a frankness natural to his character, and which he thought a duty, that he could have wished more time had been given to consideration, and to a personal acquaintance with the young Barons, whose education and modes of life had been so opposite to those of the family of Orsini.

Octavio remained thoughtful for some time, and Lusignan hoped to introduce some arguments in favour of delay; but the Chief would not trust himself farther on the subject, and changed the

conversation by saying, — “My dear Lusignan, I shall want your assistance to-morrow. We must honour our guests by some sports and entertainments. I can do nothing without you, and I need not say that, next to Julia and my daughters, my faithful knight and companion is at all times the most essential to my comfort.”

CHAPTER V.

THERE are situations when professions of regard and assurances of invariable kindness, from those we love, seem rather calculated to cause uneasiness than satisfaction. They remind us of the possibility of a change, and of the chilling approach of indifference, because sentiments warmly felt have no need of explanation. The words of Octavio produced this effect on the harassed feelings of Lusignan, though otherwise intended by him who uttered them; and who, at variance with himself, wished to express his confidence in the young warrior, though he would not allow him to urge any farther objections to the step so rashly taken. He dreaded the next remark, which might add to the doubts and anxiety arising in his mind, and therefore tried to put

an end to the conversation in the kindest manner possible.

He resumed it, however, after a short pause, by saying,—“ I am thinking, Fortebraccio, in what manner we can best entertain our young neighbours. A tournament requires longer notice, besides which it is of a nature too warlike for the present occasion. It seldom ends with leaving those who partake in it as good friends as when they entered the lists; and we have, unfortunately, disputes enough in this divided country without exciting animosity from the spirit of emulation; besides which, the knights who have remained in Europe envy and sometimes hate the crusaders. They imagine that we arrogate to ourselves a superiority in all information and acquirements; and their complaints are sometimes justified by our assuming manners. Let us endeavour to afford them no reason for dissatisfaction; and let our sports be such as to give no pretence for discord.”

Sir Guy felt disappointed. A secret wish of shewing that he deserved the good fortune which another was about to obtain had arisen in his breast, and a tournament was what he would have preferred; but the propriety of Octavio's remarks was evident, and he listened to them in silence.

Preparations⁽¹⁵⁾ were soon made in the great square before the castle gate for the festivities of

the day. The windows and balconies of all the houses which had any chance of a prospect, began to fill with their aged and female inhabitants. They were adorned with carpets and hangings, more or less sumptuous according to the fortunes of the possessors ; but those chiefly in sight were magnificent ; for the most opulent families dwelt nearest the castle. Garlands of laurel and of flowers were also suspended from the windows, and wreathed round the columns at the doors. The pavement was strewed with aromatic leaves, and the spectatresses, at the windows and in the balconies, held in their hands small baskets, gaily ornamented and filled with white and yellow field flowers, detached from their stalks, and ready to be thrown on the heads of the knights whom they most favoured, or who should most distinguish themselves in the sports.

On a terrace with a marble balustrade, surmounting the principal entrance to the castle, towards the square, appeared an awning of crimson and white, in broad alternate strings, supported by gilded poles, entwined with laurel and flowers ; and over the marble balustrade hung a crimson drapery with gold fringe and tassels. Here seats were placed for the Ladies Julia, Livia, and Seraphina, with their attendants, and also for Andrea Manero.

Trumpets, answering each other from the opposite sides of the square, proclaimed the in-

tended sports; and the peaceful lists were already formed; between which and the houses the space was crowded with the peasantry of the neighbourhood, and the humbler inhabitants of the city. The expected festivity had been announced on the foregoing evening, and before day-break a great number of the former arrived at Ampig-lione. Groups of youths and maidens, families, where the husband and wife carried each a child in their arms, while others clung to their side; all dressed in the various picturesque habits of their different districts, paced into the square, and took their station to the best advantage for seeing the sports; while they themselves formed by no means the least interesting part of the show; for their well proportioned and easy forms, with their expressive features, agreed perfectly with their habiliments. These which in general were rich, and only worn on feast days and great occurrences, descended from father to son, and from mother to daughter, ever becoming, because suited to the style of countenance and figure of the people. Some of these peasants came dancing down the hills to the sound of the tambourine, which they gracefully held aloft; while others accompanied them beating time with the Saracen trikvalac. Some had the triangle, and others the double flute; nor were there wanting pipers to salute the images placed by devotion at the corners of the streets, nor the more skilful musicians,

who united their clear and powerful voices with the chords of the lute and of the mandaline.

All hearts were light but those of the persons most concerned in the revels. "Fortebraccio! Long live Fortebraccio!" exclaimed many voices, as Sir Guy de Lusignan crossed the terrace from Octavio's apartment to reach his own. He recognised several of the brave soldiers who had served with him in Siria and Abruzzo. His heart glowed with affection towards them; but all that would once have given him pleasure was now an additional cause of pain. He greeted them, however, with a smile; but waved his hand to silence their acclamations. He then hastened to his chamber, and arrayed himself in the light and splendid habit used at the Court of Provence. His dress was white, curiously embroidered with gold, and a mantle of blue, ornamented in the same manner, was thrown over his shoulder. On his cap of blue velvet nodded a plume of white feathers, secured by a brooch of jewels, to which was suspended a pearl of considerable size.

The figure of Sir Guy de Lusignan was commanding, without losing any thing of its characteristic agility; his eyes beamed with intelligence, his features were regular, and his dark hair curled round his forehead with artless grace. In his smile there was something peculiarly captivating; but at this moment his brow was shaded by an expression of disdain, which communicated to his

lips a resemblance to those of the Pythian Apollo. He flew to the castle court and sprang on his horse, a fleet and beautiful Arabian, of a light grey colour, with a few dark spots resembling that of the mane. The fierce eyes of this animal appeared to threaten the beholders; and, on the whole, it must be confessed that Lusignan, with all his grace and attractions, had at this moment more the appearance of an avenging Deity than of a courteous knight intent on the purposes of festive hospitality.

The sumptuous trappings of his Arabian were also blue, embroidered with gold; and he seized a lance presented to him by one of his attendants with trembling solicitude, for he had rejected that which was more fit for serious debate, and had ordered that one more light should be instantly brought to him. Sir Guy was beloved by all who belonged to him, but he was also feared. Naturally kind and generous to excess, he required the greatest exactitude and the most prompt obedience to his commands, the celerity of his own movements, and his indefatigable activity being such that it was impossible to remain in his service without these qualifications.

Thrice he rode round the area to ascertain that all was arranged agreeably to the wishes of Octavio, and he endeavoured to assume a look of composure; for he was resolved not to disturb the harmony of the meeting by an ill-timed appearance of discontent or jealousy: he indeed sufficiently

collected his thoughts to remember that whatever might be the character or general conduct of the guests, he had no personal right to be offended with them ; and by degrees he became capable of the self-control necessary to carry him through a service more disagreeable, than any, the most difficult or laborious, in which he had hitherto been engaged.

Octavio now issued through the great gate of the castle on a white charger of uncommon beauty, magnificently caparisoned and adorned. The habit of the rider was splendid in the extreme, and the martial dignity, blended with courteous affability which marked his approach, added to a good person and an open countenance, could not fail of exciting respect and affection amongst the numerous spectators, who received him with repeated shouts of applause.

On each side of him rode a grandson of Manero, Pietro to the right on a powerful black horse, with gold and scarlet trappings to suit his habit, which was of the same description, his mantle black, and his cap of black velvet with a plume of feathers. He was tall, and, setting aside the expression of his countenance, which was at once ferocious and sarcastic, it were difficult to find in any one a greater share of manly beauty.

He saluted the crowd with some degree of condescension, and the windows and balconies with an air of freedom not exactly conformable to the

chivalrous notions of Octavio's followers, who rather felt indignant, but at the same time remarked that little could be expected from a young Baron who had never left his native hills.

Mario, less handsome than his brother, was more generally approved. He was neither so tall nor so remarkable for regularity of features; but he had the advantage of complexion, for that of Pietro was dark and sallow. The horse on which Mario rode was a bright bay with black mane and tail, and his dress was the same as that of his brother, with the sole difference that he had adopted white, instead of black, to unite with scarlet, which was the colour of his family. His demeanour was nearly the same as that of Pietro, whom he fondly loved, and was but too apt to imitate. In his countenance there was nothing harsh, and it was known that, when he followed simply the dictates of his own nature, he was courteous and humane.

The banner of Orsini,⁽¹⁶⁾ in which was depicted the bear so often seen in the midst of danger, and so often crowned with victory, was borne before him, and he was followed by a great number of knights and squires. Fourteen corps banners were carried before as many Chiefs under his command, divided into equal squadrons on each hand of their leader. Of these Bannerets, as they were called, Sir Guy de Lusignan was the first to the right, having taken the place allotted

to him as soon as Orsini appeared in the square. The young warriors who followed him were distinguished for their valour and skill in arms. They shared with their generous leader the favour of Orsini, who taught them to consider themselves under obligations to none but Fortebraccio. They had indeed been directed by him, and had shared his perils and his fame : no wonder therefore if the thought of leaving them greatly increased his present misery.

Octavio beheld, with a pleasure bordering on parental pride, the gallant appearance of his knights, but more especially that of Lusignan and his banner. Yet in this instance a sigh, for which he could hardly account, arose in his breast : he evidently watched every motion of the young hero,—a confused idea of his lost infant shot through his mind. Such perhaps in time he might have been ; and scarcely could he have loved him better. He thought of his daughters, and did he not wish one of them united to him whom he contemplated with sentiments of admiration and affection ? But of what avail are thoughts and wishes if the course of events be not directed by them ?

Lusignan approached the Chief to receive his orders ; and enquired when the sports were to begin. He sat, gently stroking the mane of his Arabian to keep him quiet, while fixing his eyes on Orsini, he waited for an answer.

The Chief recovered himself from the absence of mind into which he had fallen, thanked Sir Guy for his attention to his wishes ; and desired that the lists should be thrown open for the trial of skill entitled “ *The Saracen.*”

A figure magnificently attired (17) in the oriental fashion was, in consequence of this determination, placed at the farthest extremity of the lists, on a pedestal of suitable height, hung round with garlands of laurel : on the dark forehead of the figure was seen a silver star, at which the knights were to aim their lances, and he who should strike the centre, and by so doing remove the head from the shoulders, to which it was slightly annexed, was to gain the prize allotted for the most successful adventurer.

This was proclaimed successively by different heralds, habited in the livery, and bearing the arms of Orsini ; while the prize was carried round to be viewed, and afterwards suspended to one of the branches of a noble elm tree, at the commencement of an avenue opposite the castle, and leading from the square to one of Octavio’s villas, two miles distant from Ampiglione, while similar avenues communicated with other Villas from three different quarters of the city.

The prize was an armlet of gold, adorned with jewels, and tied to the branch which supported it, by ribbons of various colours imitating those

worn by the principal knights and barons assembled on this occasion.

The terrace was now occupied. Andrea Manero conducted Julia to her seat, and placed himself beside her. It is needless to describe the splendor of her dress; for it will readily be imagined that Octavio, so liberal and magnificent in all he did, was not sparing of jewels, or other expensive ornaments, to gratify the ambitious vanity of a woman whom he loved, whose faults he would not see; who, possessed of some personal charms, considered the display of them, and their adornment, as the greatest felicity, and who believed that dignity consisted in the exhibition of wealth and the exercise of power: in consequence of these ideas she was more envied than admired, and more feared than beloved; though it must be owned that many were deceived by her appearance, and that obsequiousness often wore the semblance of attachment.

Julia was far from being displeased to observe that Livia and Seraphina were not desirous of emulating her splendour—graceful in their persons, and correct in their taste, they were always becomingly, and never richly clothed. Few of those who looked at them with the most attention could think of what they wore; for who could consider the frame when the picture was so lovely? But on this occasion it was remarked that Livia wore a blue girdle slightly embroidered with gold,

while Seraphina, otherwise dressed like her sister, had one of the same pattern in white worked with silver : the rest of the dress being white.

The young barons of Saracinesco, after bowing to the ladies, joined the knights who were assembling within the lists ; but, as they approached Fortebraccio and his companions, Pietro said to his brother, in an audible whisper, "These Crusaders must be tired of warlike sports, or they would not choose for our reception such a childish amusement."

"Remember," answered Mario, "we are come on a peaceful errand."

"That is as they may treat us," replied his haughty brother ; "thou, Mario, mayst do as thou likest, but I disdain to give my sanction to such follies."

"Nay ; they are not much to my taste," resumed Mario ; "but I care not if I honour them so far as to win yonder prize for a wedding gift." Lusignan heard with indignation this offensive dialogue ; but he refrained from noticing it ; and Pietro happily lowered his voice when he again spoke to his brother ; for the sufferance of the hearer would have vanished could he have distinguished the words—"No ; no : Mario. Let the vassals and dependants of Orsini show their skill. It becomes not us to vie with them."

So saying he drew back ; and Mario did the same, while with a contemptuous glance the for-

mer looked round on the assembly; and the trumpets again sounded responsively.

A knight named Antonio Simonetti was the first who seized his lance, and wheeling round the square, came at full speed up to the Saracen, and struck the ear of the figure. Acclamations resounded through the crowd, for he had shown dexterity and firmness of attitude, but the prize was not won.

Bernardo Manfridini next made trial of his skill: he struck the destined star; but the head was not removed. The applause increased, and Cæsar Bonarelli, Alfonso Viviani, and many others, followed with various success, but without gaining the object of their wishes. The two brothers now began to think the difficulty worthy of their spears, and the elder said, — “Come, Mario, put an end to this foolery, or we shall be detained here all day.”

Mario willingly complied with the request, and made a display of horsemanship which pleased the spectators. He rode easily round the lists, and made a profound obeisance to the Lady Seraphina: then, taking aim, he struck the star, and caused the head to totter for a few seconds; but, finishing his course, he perceived, with indignant disappointment, that he had not fulfilled the conditions for obtaining the prize; as the head was yet on the shoulders.

Pietro now grasped his lance with fury, and darted onward to avenge the failure of his bro-

ther; but his anger and impatience produced their natural effects. He missed his aim, shivered his lance against the pedestal of the figure, and returned to his place with execrations on his weapon.

Sir Guy de Lusignan now rode forward, and offered a fresh lance to the angry Baron, who thanked him in a manner far from gracious, and declined it. This circumstance did not escape the watchful eye of Andrea Manero, who made a sign that he wished to speak with Sir Guy.

When the latter rode up to the palace, Andrea, leaning over the balustrade, thanked him for his courtesy to his grandson, and requested that he would make a trial of his address. Lusignan bowed and said, what was perfectly true, that he had not been accustomed to the sport in view, which was peculiar to the country, but that he would take his chance.

Having said this, he rode to the post whence he was to start. His fiery courser pawed the earth with impatience, but he had the most complete power over the noble animal; he could direct the whirlwind of his speed, and, taking aim, he struck the star with the point of his spear. The spectators, in breathless expectation, saw him toss the head towards the avenue, where it rolled over a considerable space of ground from the impetuosity of a stroke which had seemed to be light as air.

Hundreds and hundreds of voices now exclaimed, — “Fortebraccio! Long live Fortebraccio!” In vain he attempted to silence them: Octavio, though delighted with the success of Lusignan, was obliged to interfere, and to stop the acclamations. The prize was delivered to Sir Guy; who, detaching the ribbon of the colour of his mantle, fixed the armlet to the point of his lance, and rode up to the palace. He bowed to the ladies; and, extending his arm as he raised the lance, presented the armlet to the Lord of Saracinesco.

“Accept,” he said, “venerable guest! the prize, which you were the cause of my winning. It is justly yours.”

Manero accepted the gift, and seemed pleased with the courtesy of the giver. A race of Barbary horses was to be the amusement of the afternoon, and the interval of time was to be employed in partaking of a banquet, served in the great hall of the castle, the size of which was a matter of admiration for the people of the neighbourhood, who, however, used to say that, “great as it was, still greater was the generous soul of its master.”⁽¹⁸⁾

CHAPTER VI.

THE knights dismounted, and followed Octavio to the festive board; where, seated under a canopy of state with almost royal magnificence, he presided at the banquet, and omitted nothing that could contribute to the contentment of his guests. Music resounded through the spacious hall, and rose-water was poured from vases richly ornamented, and presented to the company before and after the repast. The wines of Spain, of Sicily, and of the East, were liberally served in goblets of curious workmanship, and Sirian luxury appeared in all its splendour.

Andrea Manero viewed with complacency treasures of which he flattered himself that the greater part would one day belong to his grandsons; when he promised himself a more sparing

use of them, if he should live to preside over their management. Mario admired, and Pietro criticised, the display of wealth and elegance, to which they were unused. The Secretary Fabio was in his element, assisting the steward and other domestics in marshalling and regulating persons and things. Julia appeared as the goddess of the shrine, haughty and unbending to all but Andrea Manero, who was assiduous in preserving his ascendancy over her, by flattery and insinuating policy: Livia sat indignant, and Seraphina pale and silent. The feelings of Lusignan are not to be described, and great were the efforts he had to make for the concealment of them.

The repast ended: when they were leaving the hall, he observed Livia stooping to pick up something which had fallen on the pavement. Courtesy required that he should assist her, and he perceived that it was the ribbon which he had put into his bosom, before he gave the armlet to Manero, and which he had intended to give to old Bartolomeo to tie round the first flowers which he should take to Seraphina after his departure. Perhaps, on reflection, he would not have executed this intention, little conformable to the wise forbearance which he had prescribed to himself; but he was not put to the trial; it fell accidentally as he rose from table, and Livia was the first to see it. When he approached, she said,—“This prize at least is mine;” she coloured

deeply as she spoke; and Seraphina became more pale than ever.

In a short time all resumed their posts on the terrace or in the square. The race began; and the swift-footed animals, impelled by the sharp points, to which their speed gave action, endeavoured with redoubled haste to reach the goal. The admiring multitude, eager to behold them, pressed forward like the waves of the sea, and scarcely yielded a passage to the wild and un-governed coursers. A horse of Lusignan, named Saladin, won the prize; and Pietro, who had a predilection for the whole species, and who had studied equitation more than any other art or science, could not help expressing his admiration and delight when Saladin was led round the square, with the prize he had gained. "You are a fortunate man," said he to Lusignan, "I would give much for such a horse, and I care not who knows it."

"He is not to be purchased," answered the knight, "but he is at your disposal, and a guest of the noble Orsini will oblige me by accepting him."

Pietro knew not what to say, and could hardly bring himself to consent to such a proposal. What! to deprive the courteous knight of a creature so valuable? It was not in his calculation, for amongst his faults avarice was not to be found. Pressed, however, by the generous giver, he at

last accepted Saladin, and expressed a wish that he might have another race. His request was of course granted, and Saladin again won the prize, which was a suit of armour, and more costly than the first. Pietro offered it to Lusignan with more of courtesy in his manner than he had hitherto manifested; but it was positively declined; and Pietro finished by inviting Sir Guy to hunt the wolf and the wild boar with him at the proper season.

The joy of Octavio, when informed of what had passed, is not to be described. He saw the impression made on Pietro by this unexpected mark of generosity from a stranger, and one to whom he had paid no attention. A mixture of surprise and pleasure was visible on his countenance, and when he caught the eye of the Chief he approached, and begged him to persuade Sir Guy to accept his invitation. Orsini looked round for the knight who was the object of this request. He had disappeared.

The sun had set in the midst of light purple vapours tinged with gold, and a short twilight had succeeded; but soon gave way to the shades of night. The busy attendants began to light the torches, and the castle shone with their dazzling brightness. A scene of revelry, very discordant to the feelings of Orsini's daughters, now took place. Julia would not suffer them to withdraw;

they sat to witness gaiety which they could not share, and to receive homage which they could not approve. Pietro, undismayed by the disdainful coldness of Livia, admired her beauty, and thought himself entitled to obtain her without endeavouring to please. Mario had no repulsive frown to encounter, but no cheering smile to encourage him in his passionate attentions to Seraphina. Dancers, musicians, and maskers, filled the splendid apartments, and the hour was late when all retired to rest.

The hermit of Saint Angelo, seated on his broken column, waited, with more impatience than he had felt for many years, the arrival of Lusignan, who, he was persuaded, would avail himself of the first moment of liberty to resume their conversation of the preceding evening. He felt a deep interest in the honour and happiness of this young man, whose principles he approved, and whose high spirit and acuteness of feeling delighted, and yet alarmed, him.

He waited not long before Sir Guy ascended the hill, and greeted him in a calm but melancholy tone. Anselmo thought he looked pale, and anxiously enquired how the day had passed?

Lusignan communicated the principal events, beginning with the message he had received from Orsini, and their conversation on the subject of the marriages. When he related what had

passed between him and Pietro Manero, Anselmo was pleased, and expressed his approbation with unusual warmth; but when the young warrior proceeded to say that his resolution was formed, and that he intended to put it into immediate execution, without even returning to Ampiglione, the hermit was astonished and distressed.

“I have prepared every thing for my departure,” continued Lusignan, “and I have left a letter for Octavio, to acquaint him with my intention of visiting my uncle Philip de Lusignan, at the Abbey of Saint Victor.”

The hermit expressed his doubts as to the propriety of so sudden a measure, adding, that he thought it would have been more natural to inform the Chief of his intended voyage when he saw him in the morning, and to hear what he had to say in consequence of the communication; more especially as there might still be a possibility that the alliance, so painful to his feelings, would not immediately take place.

“I see not the slightest possibility,” returned Lusignan, “even of a delay; the die is cast, and it is my duty to go.”

“But if Livia resists, and the Lord of Saracinesco desired a double marriage or none, after the acceptance of his proposal? Livia is the elder, and of course to him the more important object.”

Anselmo would have said more, but Lusignan hastily interrupted him, saying,—“If Livia resist

her father's authority and the suggestions of Julia, it is still more my duty to go. O, Anselmo! thou knowest not how willingly I could listen to the slightest reason for staying, were I not too well convinced that honor requires my immediate departure."

This was all that he could say without disclosing what in honour he considered himself bound to conceal, the sentiments of Livia, which had now shown themselves in a manner too obvious for him to mistake. He therefore, when Anselmo again urged him to wait a few days, answered with firmness:—

"Ask me not, my friend, a longer explanation of my hurried flight; but be assured that my motives are such as thy reason and the kindness of thy heart would approve."

The hermit was not one of those advisers who, more to gratify their own curiosity than to promote the welfare of others, press question on question till they lead them to say more than prudence or propriety could justify:—he looked earnestly at Lusignan, and said,—

"Is there any thing which a man retired from the world, without power or influence, can do for thee during thy absence? Speak freely; and, if thou hast a wish, declare it."

Sir Guy could have fallen on the neck of the hermit, and wept out his thanks; but he restrained himself; and, reflecting for a moment,

he said with some hesitation,—“Should Octavio, or either of his daughters, apply to thee at any time for advice or consolation, I need not say, my good, my much respected friend, assist, advise them. Name me not to Seraphina; but, if Livia enquire, say that I have poured forth my heart before thee:—no; say only this,—that the interest of Octavio’s house, and my unshaken, though unavowed, attachment to her sister, oblige me to absent myself. Now farewell! my revered, my kind instructor and friend! May the blessings dispensed by thee fall as the dew of heaven on thy head!”

Scarcely had he uttered these words when he shot like an arrow from the extended arms of Anselmo; and in a few minutes the trampling of horses was heard on the road to Tivoli.

The hermit felt at his departure a perturbation to which he had long been a stranger. The big tear rolled down his cheeks, and he sat down to revolve sadly what had passed, and to recapitulate the short conversation which had taken place. He had always found Lusignan willing to listen to the voice of reason, and curb the natural impetuosity of his temper, when the calm dictates of prudence and of duty required it. He was therefore persuaded that the seeming rashness of his proceeding must be founded on motives worthy of the noble sentiments which were always to be traced in him, no less than of the clear

judgment which he eminently possessed. Whether he surmised the real causes of his instantaneous departure must be left to conjecture. Lusignan, it is certain, was convinced that his presence could only be injurious to the peace of mind of Octavio and his family.

CHAPTER VII.

ON the following morning Andrea Manero, with his grandsons, took leave of Octavio, after settling with him a time for the signature of the contracts.

The Chief had not missed Lusignan on the preceding evening; for he supposed that he was engaged with the other knights in promoting the sports and revels, which, according to the custom of those times, were interspersed with allegorical poetry and representations under various disguises. In the morning he was surprised not to see him appear to take leave of the guests; and, as soon as they were gone, finding himself only surrounded by his family, he enquired for Sir Guy de Lusignan.

A page went to his apartment, and in a few minutes returned with a letter found there, which he put into the hand of his master.

As Octavio read it, he betrayed visible emotion; and the expression of his countenance did not escape the quick eye of Livia, who instantly exclaimed, — “Has any thing happened to Lusignan?”

Octavio, before he answered her, once more perused the letter, and then said, in a calmer tone than his first feelings might have produced, — “He is gone on his long-intended expedition to Provence; for which he had my leave: I was vexed for a moment that he should have been in such haste; but I believe he has done well.”

Livia rushed out of the room, and was soon followed by Julia, alarmed at the scene which portended an avowal of sentiments long suspected by her; though she had flattered herself they were not of sufficient force to prevent the success of her schemes, and wished to conceal them from Orsini.

Seraphina remained trembling, with her eyes fixed on those of her father.

“Come near me, dearest child,” said Octavio, “and listen to what I have to say. I once thought there was an attachment between Lusignan and your sister; but I was assured that, on her part at least, my conjectures were unfounded. Her agitation at this moment startles

me; and I know not what to think. I have loved him, and still love him, as a son; and his conduct towards you both has always appeared to me that of an affectionate brother. Since our return from the Neapolitan states, when I have observed any particular attention to her, I have sportively mentioned it to him; and he has constantly and seriously disclaimed having any other sentiments for her than those of respect and esteem. I know he loves me with filial affection; and the truth of Lusignan is far above suspicion: but might he not deceive himself? Perhaps he knew not his own heart till it was lately tried by the proposal of Manero; and I am led to surmise, from the step which he has now taken, that, conscious of the mutual attachment, he has prudently and honourably resolved not to influence her even by his presence. Withdrawing himself for a time from what, I trust, he considers as his home, he will be enabled at his return to view with approbation the arrangements which expediency induces me to make, and which seem to promise all I could wish."

Seraphina could only answer with tears; they flowed in abundance from her eyes, now rivetted on the ground. Her father attributed them to sympathy for her sister's affection; for he knew that she always shared the sorrows of those who mourned, and more especially of those whom she loved. He showed her Lusignan's letter; it con-

tained only a few lines, intimating his intention of setting off that night, and his dislike of saying farewell, adding a request that Octavio would take his brave followers under his immediate protection during his temporary absence. It was with difficulty that Seraphina could read the characters traced with an agitated hand; and her eyes, dimmed with tears, refused their office. Octavio conjured her to add her efforts to those of Julia in representing to her sister the impropriety of giving way to her passion, supposing his suspicions were just; and he enlarged on the noble, disinterested conduct of Lusignan, as an example to be followed.

Seraphina raised her still weeping eyes to heaven, and secretly implored that assistance of which she stood so much in need, while Octavio continued to praise the absent Lusignan, commenting largely on the generosity of his behaviour during the whole of a day which to him must have been a painful trial. He said that the impression made by his courtesy on Pietro Manero was evident, and that it gave him reason to augur well of the young Baron, whose actions were often misrepresented, and whose measures were misunderstood by those who make no allowance for difference of education and early habits.

“They have been ill-tutored,” continued he; “the haughtiness of their nature has been allowed too free a scope; but they have magnanimity,

understanding, and a station in life which they will feel it their duty to sustain, by the exercise of knightly virtues. Their manners will be softened by the charms of domestic society ; and Pietro loves your sister. As to Mario, there can be no doubt of his attachment to you ; and I see before you the fairest prospect of happiness. Believe me, dearest Seraphina, had I not been sure of this, I would not have listened to the proposal, however advantageous in every point of view. The alliance of Manero will render us formidable to the Ghibelines ; I would live well with them, if possible, but should discord be their aim, I must be prepared to meet them.

The fortitude of Seraphina was shaken by the affectionate manner in which her father expressed his anxiety for her happiness. A ray of hope seemed to break in upon her, and to open the way for breaking a treaty, which she considered as the greatest of misfortunes. Might she not throw herself at his feet, and avow her repugnance, declare that she devoted herself to misery wholly and solely from a principle of duty, and that Lusignan was the object of her affections ?

These thoughts passed through her mind ; but she checked them with that self-controul which was the distinctive feature of her character : her filial attachment could not blind her judgment so far as to conceal from her the unfortunate truth, that the arguments of Octavio were

only repetitions of what had been suggested to him, or to persuade her that he had not been rash in contracting so lightly an engagement of such importance: but she felt the danger that might attend a rupture with Manero, and saw that it was too late for her father to recede. She therefore assured him unequivocally of her obedience, and promised to use every effort in her power to induce her sister to follow her example.

In adopting this line of conduct, Seraphina was influenced by no latent jealousy. She had long been accustomed to observe the behaviour of Lusignan with the penetrating glance of real affection, and she could have no doubt of his sentiments. After silently kissing her father's hand, she proceeded to her sister's apartment.

Livia was alone, pacing the room in violent agitation; but, on seeing the door open, she stopped and collected herself.

"Sister!" she said, "we are considered as aliens in this house. Our ambitious and deceitful step-mother carries all before her. Our father, a hero in Palestine, submits in his own states to the despotism of this woman, like a frightened child; and we, who ought to be his first care, are sacrificed to her caprices. You may tamely submit; but I will not suffer myself to be led in triumph to the den of that robber."

As she spoke, fire flashed from her dark eyes, and she stood erect, wrapping her mantle about

her with an air of determination, which gave little hope of her yielding to the mild and persuasive voice of Seraphina. The latter, however, made an attempt to speak, but, before she could utter a sentence, her sister continued :—

“Nay; perhaps you love Mario Manero. He is reported to be a more humane, a less savage Chief of Banditti than my destined Lord. You may be decorated with the spoils of plundered wretches, but Livia Orsini will never condescend to such degradation.”

“Dearest Livia!” returned Seraphina, “do not give way to this violence of temper. Consider the interests of our house, our father’s wishes, the duty of filial obedience: Heaven knows I have no partiality for Mario Manero;” as she spoke, an involuntary shudder betrayed her feelings.

“Then to whom are you partial?” she exclaimed with a vehemence that terrified her sister into silence. “Say quickly to whom you are partial, or I shall go distracted?”

“To no man, dearest Livia,” replied Seraphina after a few moments: “I would be impartial to all. It is the duty of women to obey; and, in our peculiar circumstances, having unfortunately no brother, it is natural that our father should look to us as the supporters of his house, and expect that we should listen to the dictates of reason rather than of love.”

“Then you know what love is?” said Livia with a smile, which implied any thing but pleasure or approbation.

“I trust,” said Seraphina, “I may at least know how to perform my duty without repugnance, when I become more acquainted with the temper and character of Mario Manero. I cannot love a man of whom I know so little.”

Livia, not content with this, pursued the painful enquiry by saying,—“Then you can love a man, whom you have had frequent opportunities of seeing; one whose temper and character you have had leisure to appreciate?”

“My dear sister,” cried Seraphina in a tone less patient than was usual with her, “is this a time for mutual interrogations? Are we not called imperiously to do our duty? Let us ask ourselves whether we have not the power of bending our minds to the performance of it!”

Livia in a half-absent manner exclaimed,—“I am satisfied. She does not love: she knows not what love is, or she could not talk thus.” Then addressing her sister, she said,—“True, we have no brother, but I am the daughter of a hero; his eldest daughter; and, like another Camilla, I will head his bold and faithful vassals to defend the patrimony of our noble house. The name of Orsini shall not be sullied by your sister, and I see no reason to seek for assistance beyond the hands and hearts of those who have rendered our

ancient banner the terror and admiration of the East. In what am I inferior to a Margaret or a Beatrice, or to any other heroine who has accompanied her Lord to the Holy Land? O were I there, how willingly would I affront all dangers to share the toils and mitigate the sufferings of a beloved Crusader!"

A deep blush overspread the cheeks of Seraphina; for her sister expressed sentiments profoundly engraved in her own heart. She could not trust herself with a longer conference, and only said,—“ I will leave you for the present, and urge you no farther. Your heart is warm and noble. Listen to its dictates, and you will not sacrifice a positive duty to imaginary heroism.” It was with a faltering voice that she pronounced these words, and hastily withdrew to her chamber to weep in secret.

Livia remained absorbed in useless and unsatisfactory reflections: she had more vivacity than firmness of mind; and she was more capable of acting with spirit than of suffering with fortitude.

A violent altercation had taken place before her interview with Seraphina, between her and Julia. Her advantage in point of argument was great, but it availed her little. The wife of Orsini wanted not to be convinced, but to be obeyed; and was exasperated by resistance. The friendship supposed to subsist between them, founded, as was

said, on similarity of character, vanished at the first instant when opposite views and interests came in contact.

The desire of Julia was to remove from Amiglionne the daughters of Orsini; and, as Andrea Manero was equally anxious to obtain them, their separate projects agreed in this particular instance, though widely different in other respects. Julia had not sufficient penetration to dive into the actual policy, or to conjecture the future plans, of Manero.

The attachment which Livia had manifested for Lusignan in a manner so unguarded, was strengthened, if not awakened, by the displeasure she felt at the proposal of Manero, and the sudden departure of the young warrior. Pride and delicacy would otherwise have prevented her showing a partiality unauthorised by his conduct towards her. Young, and endowed with shining accomplishments, with a cultivated mind, and a taste for all that was elegant and heroic, she saw in Lusignan the brilliant image of her romantic fancy: she saw him in her airy visions surrounded by the rays of love and glory, reconquering all that his family had lost, and uniting with the dazzling attributes of the conqueror the mild and beneficent endowments of the legislator and paternal sovereign. Whatever might be the delusion, it must be owned that the portrait was not flattered; but ambition, though of the noblest kind, was the

passion that guided her choice ; and, as a rapid courser hastening to the goal sees nothing in his way, so Livia, heedless of obstacles, and impatient of contradiction, without ascertaining the real sentiments of Lusignan, or weighing her own duties, was disposed to sacrifice all things to a phantom of her own creation.

The sacrifices of love, when founded on mutual esteem and affection, are made to duty alone. It clings to that unerring guide, as a safeguard for its honor and existence ; and such was the love of Seraphina. She gave way to her tears, and felt her heart in some degree lightened by the indulgence of them, for she was nearly overcome and exhausted by the constraint which she had imposed on herself, and by all that she had done and suffered. Her affectionate and faithful attendant found her in this situation, and expressed her sympathy.

“ Dear, good Vincenza,” said she on perceiving the distress she had caused. “ Do not be alarmed, I am not ill ; but I have been with my sister, and she is very unhappy : I fear she will have great difficulty in bringing herself to comply with my father’s wishes in the arrangements making for her marriage as well as mine.”

“ Alas ! and is it settled ? and must you marry Signor Mario Manero ?” said Vincenza.

“ It is my duty,” answered Seraphina, “ to do what is deemed best for me by my kind and indulgent father.”

“And can you like Signor Mario?” continued the well meaning, but indiscreet Vincenza.

“I hope I may, I will endeavour to discover his good qualities, and to shut my eyes on his failings, if he have any. Above all I will seek support and consolation where alone they are to be found, and where they will not be refused to my humble supplications.”

Poor Seraphina could say no more, she sunk into the arms of her nurse, and sobbed on her bosom.

Vincenza had an affectionate heart, and a plain good understanding: she tacitly reproached herself for her imprudence, and forebore further interrogations. By quiet attentions, rather than a display of ill-timed and softening tenderness, she calmed by degrees the troubled spirits and agitated nerves of Seraphina, advising her to rest herself for a short space of time on the couch, which she began to smooth and to prepare for her reception.

“Dear Vincenza, I cannot remain inactive,” said her lady, “I dare not trust my own thoughts at present. I wish Father Eustace were not absent: for he is the only one of the monks of the neighbouring monastery whom I have been accustomed to address with confidence, and I cannot just now apply to a stranger.”

“It is unfortunate,” replied Vincenza, “but let me think—you are not, I fear, acquainted with the hermit of Saint Angelo?”

“ I am not. He visits poor people, and avoids the rich, alas ! as if the rich had no afflictions.”

“ Perhaps none, he thinks, which he could alleviate.”

“ His advice might do much,” resumed Seraphina, after a moment’s pause. “ I mean not for myself—I am decided : but for my unhappy Livia. He is said to be a man of wonderful knowledge, and of great acquirements : she admires such persons, and has frequently expressed a wish to talk with him ; but in vain ; for he declined conference, and was not to be diverted from his resolution. Thou knowest him, Vincenza, but I believe hast seldom seen him of late.”

Tears came into the eyes of Vincenza, and she said, “ he was most kind and listened to me when I was in affliction. He saved me from despair after the death of my child, when I had not been long a widow ; but when I became more calm, and appeared to be comforted, though heaven knows how much I felt, he advised me to be active, to attend strictly to all my remaining duties, and to be exact, but not fanciful, in my devotions. I begged him to let me say my prayers at the hermitage ; but he answered that it was too distant, that I must neglect my service by going so far, and that it was better for me to go to the chapel of the castle, or to the great church of Ampiglione.”

“ Surely,” rejoined Seraphina, “ a man of such compassionate nature as you describe him would

not reject the afflicted in any class of society; if he knew their griefs to be real."

"I know not; I should not think he would," said Vincenza; "but he has, with all his mildness and benevolence, a look of firmness and dignity, which always prevents my pressing on his retirement, or asking a second time what he has once refused."

"Thou shalt go with me to-morrow to the hermitage," said Seraphina, "and we will try whether we can obtain an audience for Livia. I would not have her repulsed. When sawest thou the hermit last?"

"He stopped me," answered Vincenza, "as I was returning the last time from San Vito, after visiting my aged father. He enquired of his health, wished me a good day, and left me. One exception he has made of late to his general rule; for Sir Guy de Lusignan has been permitted to sit for hours with him at the door of the hermitage.

"Lusignan!" interrupted Seraphina with emotion, "then he must have been unhappy; for the hermit admits those alone who want consolation, and Lusignan poured his sorrows out before him. Good, excellent Anselmo! for so, methinks, thou wert wont to name him. What a blessing must he be to those who dare approach him! But I believe it may be more discreet not to intrude on this venerable man. He at least might think it an indiscretion, and I would not offend him."

After this conversation Seraphina tried to compose herself, but in vain. She asked no farther questions, and she feared a visit to the hermit's cell might have the appearance of seeking Lusignan. He might be still in the neighbourhood; or the hermit might suspect her of curiosity to know the motives for his sudden departure. The more she now wished that it were permitted her to go to Saint Angelo, the less she felt herself justified in attempting it.

Vincenza on the contrary was very desirous that her lady should converse with Anselmo; for she gratefully remembered the comfort which she had derived from his advice and instructions; and whatever might be the cause of the affliction which she now witnessed, the effects had for the last two days been visible and painful to her. The attachment which she felt for Seraphina was superior to that which she bore to her sister; but she loved them both; and, though different in many respects, the two sisters were so fond of each other that it was impossible to love the one without being warmly interested for her companion. Neither was Livia deficient in those qualities which captivate and oblige. She was naturally courteous and liberal; and her haughty spirit was never shown but to repel what she thought an injury or insult. She was too high-minded to let her dependents feel its effects; and, though not so regularly attentive to the wants and distresses, or

to the feelings of others, as Seraphina ever was, whether grave or gay, happy or unhappy; yet Livia was by no means deficient in the wish or in the endeavour to render those around her happy.

Julia was unwilling to make an unfavourable report to Octavio of her attempts to pacify the elder sister; because she had previously ventured to assure him that little was wanting to gain her over to a complete approbation of the plan; and that, could he have suspected the excess of her repugnance, he would never have consented to the proposal. She now applied to Seraphina, and inveighed in terms highly displeasing to her against the unbending character of her sister.

Seraphina answered that she had in obedience to her father's wishes, entered already on the subject with Livia. "We do not yet," she said, "see the matter in the same point of view; but I trust we both act conscientiously. My sister withholds her hand, because she cannot yet conquer the repugnance of her heart; and I yield mine without venturing to fathom it."

Julia was astonished at the firmness with which Seraphina defended her sister. She used many efforts to win her over, and even went so far as to say that she had mistaken their characters.

At length finding that she inspired no confidence though treated with the utmost respect, she left the sisters to pass the remainder of the day in their own apartments.

CHAPTER VIII.

SERAPHINA dismissed her attendant at an early hour, and fortified her mind by an examination of her conduct throughout the day. She had the consolation of reflecting that she had acted in unison with her principles, and she flattered herself that the sacrifice of her inclinations would become daily less painful. This was a beneficial illusion ; for human virtue would ill support present affliction could it foresee the superadded misery of unceasing and unavailing regret.

The departure of Lusignan was a blow for which she was unprepared ; but under the present circumstances she almost felt it a relief : yet, wherever she turned, his image seemed hovering near her : his voice still vibrated in her ear : pain-

fully it vibrated ; for it was as if he reproached her with her engagement to Mario. Could she have fulfilled this engagement in his presence ? The thought was horror ; and she believed his absence a blessing. Alas ! she had yet to learn the accumulated wretchedness, the listless vacuity of long and hopeless separation.

A thousand tender recollections crowded on her mind. She was but too conscious of the sentiments of Lusignan, which, though never declared, had been revealed to her in so many instances, and in such various ways, that it was impossible to mistake them. She had no less observed his efforts to conceal them ; and she was not surprised that the little notice he took of her in public should have given rise to the suspicion that he preferred her sister. She knew that to deceive was not in his nature, and that the error into which Octavio had been led was involuntary on his part. Livia, she thought, could not be deceived ; and she was therefore hopeful of persuading her, after the first effervescence should have subsided, to follow her example, and obey the commands of her father. These and many other reflections banished sleep ; and morning found her still engaged in them. She hailed with gratitude the ray of light which began to illuminate her chamber ; but what were the objects on which it fell ? An ivory casket, given her by Lusignan ; the manuscript of the acts of Richard Cœur de Lion, copied by his

hand ; the silver arrow, won by him as the prize of archery at the sports celebrated in honor of her father's second nuptials : — all these remembrances of early youth retained their places near the casement, whence the morning air diffused freshness through the apartment, while the birds, inhabitants of the ivy on the castle walls, began to twitter, and hail the rising sun.

Seraphina arose: and, as she was accustomed, gazed on the beauteous scene below. She had often declared, that to inhale the perfume of the orange groves, and the early breezes of the Mediterranean, was happiness sufficient for a mortal. That elasticity of spirits, produced by a delightful climate in youth and careless innocence, had been swept down by the rude blast of misfortune: she felt that happiness was fled. She reproached herself for being insensible to the charms which had so long attracted her enraptured fancy: but she recollected herself, and while she prepared for leaving her apartment, she resolved that reason should henceforth be her guide, and that she would remember, not only how the airy visions of fancy assume a cheerful or a gloomy aspect, according to our state of mind; but also that impressions made by external objects are subject to the same variation, as dependant on the temper in which they find us. Afflicted as she was, this reflection taught her that one of our first duties is to preserve that equanimity which

can alone enable us to be just to our fellow creatures, contented in ourselves, and grateful to Providence.

Not less the balmy fragrance of the air,
The birds less jocund, or the fields less fair ;
Thy friends less kind, thy menial train less true,
Though stern affliction spread her sable hue :
The cup of bliss thou hast not power to taste,
But dash it not, ungrateful, in thy haste :
Wait, humbly wait, till joy's returning ray
Illumine the prospect, and restore the day.

The mournful, but unrepining, Seraphina, sought the apartment of her sister, which joined her own ; and, as she entered softly, she found her in a restless sleep, and sat down beside her bed to watch. Her intentions were so pure and affectionate, that she could not help nourishing a hope that she might ultimately prevail with her sister. She meant not to flatter her with a prospect of felicity : for she expected none herself ; but she wished, in the kindest manner possible, to bring her to a sense of her duty.

Livia had passed an agitated, and almost sleepless night. Towards morning she had sunk into a state of disturbed slumber, in which she was tormented by fearful dreams. She awoke with a flushed and altered countenance : while Seraphina, who had been earnestly watching her, felt alarmed ; and, seizing her arm, exclaimed, "dearest Livia ! for Heaven's sake be composed :

this pulse beats dreadfully." As she spoke, tears flowed from her eyes; and the heart of Livia was softened.

"Thou art too good, too kind, dearest Seraphina," she said, "and I fear I was impatient with thee yesterday: but I am indeed ill and miserable. Into what calamities the rash and interested woman, who governs this devoted house, has plunged Orsini and his children "

"Let us not add to them by disobedience, Livia," said her sister, "yield but to the voice of duty, and I will forget all that passed yesterday. I have forgotten it already." As she spoke, she kissed her cheek, and continued, "remember, we shall not be separated; if we have sorrows, we shall share them with each other; and a greater sacrifice might have been our lot. Where is the Baron's daughter, who chooses for herself, or whose consent is asked in treaties of this nature?"

Livia returned her caresses with sisterly affection. She sighed deeply: but soon roused herself, and said, "I must feel indignant that a neighbouring baron, perhaps equal to my father in wealth, and superior in the arts of policy, but certainly inferior in rank, and in martial exploits, should spread alarm and confusion amongst us, lord it over our inclinations, and force from our presence the best and dearest of our friends."

To the last sentence Seraphina had not courage to reply: but she said "Andrea Manero as-

sumes no authority over us. He proposes an alliance with our family, and our father is disposed to accept it."

"Has he a will of his own, dearest Seraphina? answer me that; and tell me what we shall gain by sacrificing all we hold dear to a mistaken sense of duty. My father's nobler nature will become the slave of his artful neighbour: we shall be wretched; and our haughty step-mother will be the only gainer by this ill-omened measure. How she has deceived me! I was not aware of her machinations; or I would have put a stop to them before they involved us in their snake-like folds."

"Ah! would it had been so!" exclaimed Seraphina, whose feelings were at this moment in many respects similar to those of her sister; but she added with a deep sigh, "it is now too late. Our father cannot retract what he has promised; and we must not load our conscience with the guilt of disobedience. I, at least, dare not. I have promised to obey; promised it to a beloved and indulgent father."

Livia struggled with a rising sigh, and was silent for some minutes: at length she pursued the argument by saying, "Our situation is different, in many respects, my sister; if thou hast not distinguished another with the eyes of preference, at least a Pietro Manero is not offered to thee."

Seraphina, with difficulty, concealed the emotion caused by words which almost amounted to

an avowal of the same preference as she herself so deeply felt. She faintly replied "I know little of the brothers ; but Pietro is reputed the leading character ; and, at all events, our destinies will be similar."

"Strange indifference!" said Livia to herself, as her sister hastily left the room, "or, if not indifference, what a sublimity of virtue ! How far am I beneath her ! Let me examine my own heart, and see whether I am incapable of following her example. I love not Pietro Manero, it is true ; and yet I could sooner give my hand to the wild original than to the servile copy. A lofty courage, a fair exterior, and an independent spirit, are charms which with many women might go far. All these advantages are possessed by Pietro ; but how much more by Lusignan ! and in him are they not graced by every talent and every virtue ? Can Seraphina be insensible to such exalted worth, and wed a Mario Manero, the shadow of his brother ? I cannot comprehend it. O Lusignan ! would I could forget thee !"

While she was thus reasoning with herself, Vincenza entered the chamber, anxiously making enquiry of her health ; and, perceiving the uneasiness of mind under which she laboured, after some conversation, she earnestly recommended her applying for advice and consolation to the hermit of St. Angelo, and offered to accompany her to his cell.

Livia paused awhile before she should give an answer to the proposal: at length she said, "Has my sister visited this hermitage? Is it there she has acquired that heavenly calm which I should envy in one less dear to me?"

"I wanted to persuade her to seek the venerable Anselmo," said Vicenza, "when I saw her afflicted on your account; but she declined it, and would not intrude on his solitude; because she had heard that he confined the blessing of his counsel and assistance to the poor. I assured her that Sir Guy de Lusignan had passed many hours with him, as I was well informed; and that I believed he might be induced to talk with her. However, she does not seem to wish it. If you are equally averse to making the trial, perhaps you might derive consolation from telling your grief to one of the fathers of St. Benedict."

"By no means," replied her attentive hearer, "if I speak to any one it shall be to this Anselmo. I like not those solitary beings, when, from discontent or indolence, they relinquish the world, and its active duties: but this hermit, I am told, is of a different class, and does much good around us. What may have been his motive for seclusion, I know not, but he can be no common beadsman, if Sir Guy de Lusignan found charms in his society. I have no objection to open my heart to him though I do not promise to conform myself to his instructions; for, at his time of life, the heart be-

comes insensible to the good and evil of this life ; and the imagination no longer paints, in vivid colours, the scenes of triumph or of anguish. However, I am impatient to see him : I will rise immediately, and we will go together to the hermitage."

"I must prepare him for your visit," answered Vincenza, "otherwise we shall run the risk of not being admitted "

"Fly, then, Vincenza : lose no time : for I shall have little peace till I have obtained this interview."

So saying she sprang from her couch, and, calling for one of her attendants, hastily attired herself : while Vincenza, though accustomed to the impatience of her temper, was at a loss to divine why it was at that moment excited to such a degree, when, but a short time before, she had no purpose of visiting St. Angelo.

Willing, however, to do any thing in her power to alleviate the painful feelings she had witnessed, she hastened to obey ; but turned back to ask whether she should try to persuade Seraphina to go with them. This Livia peremptorily refused, and again urged her instant departure.

Arrived at the hermitage, the good Vincenza was mortified to learn that Anselmo was absent, and that his companion, Isodore, did not expect his return till late in the evening, or perhaps,

the next day. Disappointed and vexed at herself for her well intended proposal of consulting Anselmo, she retraced, with weary steps, the path leading to Ampiglione.

As she approached the city, where the road was shaded by thick underwood and lofty elms, she heard a rustling noise among the branches; and, soon after, a letter dropped at her feet. She picked it up; but to her it could convey no intelligence; for the natural good sense of Vincenza was unattended by the humblest instruction. The mere elements of learning were, in that age, confined to a few; and, although the thirst for knowledge was rapidly increasing, it had not yet reached the unassuming and contented person who now, for the first time, regretted her incapacity of decyphering such hieroglyphics.

She listened, and heard departing footsteps behind the trees; but could not get a sight of any one through the branches. What to do with the letter she knew not; for it appeared to her highly improper to take it to either of the young ladies, for whom, she feared, it might be intended. They, indeed, were scholars; and she had often lamented their being so; and, more particularly with respect to Livia; for, as to Seraphina, it only increased her admiration of her, when she considered how many dangerous acquirements she possessed, without in the least making a bad use of them.

Vincenza held the letter in her hand, thinking how she could safely get it interpreted. She could observe that the seal was unimportant, and that there was no superscription. Having been thrown at her feet, she had, therefore, a right to open it; which she did with some trepidation. It seemed to contain very little; but that little was to her unintelligible.

Fatigued as she was, she thought that the only prudent measure to be taken was to return to the hermitage, and get Isodore to explain it. She knew he could read, for he had been taught by Anselmo; and though she would have preferred the latter as an interpreter, she believed that she might fearlessly confide in the taciturnity of his companion.

She found him administering some drugs to a boy, who had come for them as far as from the unhealthy neighbourhood of the marshes, where he and his parents had been labouring under the influence of fever. She sat down on the steps, and waited till the boy was gone. She then told her tale to Isodore, and he read as follows:

“Have compassion on the dying and the helpless; fear not to enter a grotto beneath the ruined sepulchre nearest to St. Angelo; but be secret, or revenge will strike the innocent.”

Vincenza made no doubt that this short epistle was intended for herself. When a good action was to be performed, she always thought

herself called upon for its accomplishment ; and she was hastening to the place indicated, when Isodore stopped her, thinking it hardly prudent that she should risk so mysterious a visit. He called to the boy, who was in the garden binding together some vegetables, which he was allowed to carry away, and he desired that he would stay at the hermitage with Vincenza until his return, which, he said, should be speedy.

The tomb, as was said in the letter, being the first at which he arrived, was not very distant from St. Angelo, and, in little more than half an hour, he was seen by the anxious Vincenza coming back, with something wrapped in his cloak. His countenance was melancholy : but he said nothing in answer to her enquiries. He went into the cell, deposited his burden, and, returning, dismissed the boy with repeated instructions for the use of the drugs, and orders to report in a few days whether the remedy proved successful, or failed of effecting the cure.

When the patient was fairly out of sight, Isodore beckoned to Vincenza to follow him into the cell, where, on his couch of straw, she beheld an infant, to all appearances, six months old, strong and beautiful, which, at the sight of Vincenza, stretched out its little hands, and cried for nourishment. In reply to her anxious and numerous questions, Isodore told her that he descended into the subterraneous grotto, which he

found beneath the ancient sepulchre: that he there saw, by the faint light of an aperture in the roof, the sad spectacle of a woman in the sleep of death, her head resting on a stone, and the infant on her lap. He applied a cordial to her lips, but could not recover her. The spirit had fled: but he meant to return, after consigning to Vincenza the care of the helpless infant. It was very unfortunate, he added, that Anselmo should be absent at this moment: for he scarcely knew how to act; as he had strictly charged him not to quit the hermitage till he should come back, unless for some case of singular distress. The poor woman, he said, had no marks of violence. She seemed to have fallen a victim to fatigue and exhaustion of strength. He again looked at the letter, and thought it, on every account, impossible that the characters could have been traced by her who was now no more.

The child was neatly dressed in coarse materials, but had no relic tied round its neck, nothing to indicate the persons to whom it might have belonged. Vincenza looked at it with compassion, and, for its sake, began to be very impatient to return to Ampiglione, where she also feared her long absence must have occasioned uneasiness: more especially in the impatient Livia. Isodore, however, was unwilling that she should depart until he should return a second time from his melancholy visit to the sepulchre,

and would not suffer that she should accompany him.

From this perplexity they were relieved by the arrival of an honest peasant, whose cottage was situated at some distance from St. Angelo, and nearer Cantalupo. He came on a beast of burden, and, not finding Anselmo, with whom he wished to speak, would have departed immediately; but Isodore, who knew him to be good and discreet, told him the strange adventure, recommending to him secrecy, till more should be discovered. It was agreed that Peppo, for such was his name, should remain with the child, while Isodore returned to the cavern to make a last effort, with fresh cordials, for the recovery of the poor woman, which, however it appeared to him hopeless, still dwelt on his mind. Peppo was also to lend his beast to the weary Vincenza for going back to Ampiglione. The hermit had two goats, and, before her departure, she milked one of them to feed the child, who seemed delighted with the refreshment. Peppo had two children of his own, and a wife as industrious and kindhearted as himself. She was well known to Vincenza, and, as her youngest child was about the age of the poor infant just found, she thought her a proper person for taking charge of it. She told him that she would pay for its maintenance, and would contrive and see his wife very soon, to settle every thing, and to

furnish the necessary clothes. She then took her leave, and Isodore, recommending to her and to Peppo the strictest secrecy, hastened back to the ancient tomb.

All his efforts, however, to recal the unfortunate woman to life, proved ineffectual ; and he once more trod back his steps to the hermitage : on the arrival of Peppo's beast, which was returned with a small parcel of clothes for the child, collected in haste by the provident Vincenza, he dismissed the good countryman, and sat down to wait for Anselmo.

CHAPTER IX.

ANSELMO returned in the evening from Tivoli, where he had been detained the whole of the day; and yet, late as it was, when he heard what had passed during his absence, he went with Isodore to the cavern, and found the poor pilgrim extended on the ground, decently covered by his pious care with a mantle which he had thrown over her. A small basket of unexhausted provisions stood beside her, with her staff and bottle of water. Her clothing, like that observed on the infant, was neat and coarse; but there was neither writing, relic, nor any thing that could promise to throw light on the mysterious subject, farther than the letter thrown at the feet of Vincenza.

Anselmo concluded that jealousy must have been concerned in this adventure, and that the life of the child might be in danger if the circumstance were disclosed. There was nothing in the appearance of the woman above mediocrity, and from the account given by Vincenza to the charitable Isodore, nothing that could lead them to trace the person who wrote the letter.

Anselmo, therefore, for the sake of the infant, conceived that it was most prudent to inter the unknown sufferer where she then was, and assisted by his companion, after praying fervently for the sad remains, they dug a grave, and committed them to the same earth which in the splendid days of Imperial Rome had been covered by the lofty cenotaph of a Proprætor.

On the ensuing morning, Vincenza arrived at an early hour and entreated Anselmo to see and converse with Livia. She said that her agitation and disappointment on the preceding day had been so great, that she scarcely knew how to justify her long absence without mentioning the circumstance that had occurred; but that she had not entered into any particulars, only saying that she had found a destitute child, and could not leave it till she had put it under proper care. This, she added, had pacified the Lady, who immediately gave her gold for the poor infant; but remained in the most anxious state of mind, and that, although her impatient and unbending

temper might deserve reprehension, she certainly merited compassion at a time when the happiness of her life was at stake.

“But are not the two sisters,” said the hermit, “equally devoted to espouse men with whom they foresee little happiness; or does Seraphina feel no repugnance, while she obeys her father’s will?”

“The Lady Seraphina is an angel, and unlike all others, she thinks only of her duty; but that is no reason, Reverend Father, why you should not feel pity for her sister.”

This simple remark had its weight with Anselmo, and at that moment Livia advanced; for she had only seated herself under the trees to wait the success of Vincenza’s entreaties, and had not patience for farther delay. When she appeared, though covered by her veil, compassion was not the sentiment which she naturally inspired. It was impossible not to be struck with the grace and dignity of her figure and deportment. More of the Calliope than of the Juno, she had animation as well as majesty; and had there been a Canova in the thirteenth century, he would have chosen for his model of the heroic muse the elder sister, as he would the younger for that of a Venus Urania.

Livia bowed to the hermit, and apologized for her intrusion, by saying that she trusted he would not think his time misspent by listening to a per-

son whom the unthinking multitude might suppose exempt from care and affliction.

“Lady,” said the hermit, “we must forgive the multitude, if in this case they judge erroneously. Accustomed to suffer the numerous ills attendant on penury, they consider all else as imaginary, and they are not easily brought to comprehend the equal dispensations of providence. Youth, health, rank, and riches, may be insufficient to secure happiness; yet still they are blessings, and their possessor should not be insensible to their value: should employ them as the means of giving happiness to others, and return thanks for them to the great Author of all good. If we justly estimate the advantages which have fallen to our lot, we shall guard against the morbid progress of discontent, and we shall neither undervalue what we possess, nor overvalue what we cannot obtain.”

“Of what use,” said Livia, “are all the advantages which you have named, if freedom of choice be denied us?”

“If our own choice render us unhappy, which is often the case,” returned Anselmo, “what an additional misery is self-accusation! When we have sacrificed every thing to self-gratification, and are no longer gratified, what is left us?”

“It is our own fault,” said Livia, “if we choose ill.”

“Not always,” resumed the hermit, mildly. “We are imperfect creatures; easily deceived by others; still more easily by our own imagination. For this it would be hard to blame ourselves; unless in preference to the voice of duty we listen to the suggestions of mere fancy, and act in consequence.”

Livia coloured, but she replied,—“For what then are discernment, judgment, and reflection given to us, if we are blindly to obey the will of others?”

“They are given to us,” said Anselmo, gravely, “that we may discern real good from imaginary evil; that we may judge impartially others and ourselves; and that we may reflect on past errors to avoid them in future.”

“I see,” said Livia, “one error that I have committed; I have done wrong in taking up your time. You are willing to condemn me without hearing me; and I care not to argue, but to tell my griefs. Your heart is barred against them, and I will no longer trouble you.”

As she spoke, a tear burst from her eye, which she strove to hide by drawing her veil closer, and turned to withdraw; but Anselmo stopped her by exclaiming:—

“Heaven forbid! I were unworthy of the air I breathe, did I not feel the griefs of those who suffer. Pardon me, Lady, and freely speak to me, if you think I can be of any service to you.”

Livia was at this moment at variance with herself. She felt resolved not to give her consent to the proposed union; and yet her heart told her that all was not right. She had too good an understanding also not to see the fallacy of her own arguments, and she wished for the sanction of the hermit to justify her resistance. Strange self-deception, which so often leads us from the path of duty!

Vincenza remained at some distance, that she might not interrupt a conversation which, she hoped, might prove essentially beneficial, and as the hermit and Livia walked up and down on the terrace, the latter communicated to him her reasons for refusing Pietro Manero, her displeasure at the part taken by her step-mother; and all that has been related of her sentiments. She then ventured to enquire his opinion with respect to the departure of Lusignan; and, although guarded in her expressions, she said enough to convince Anselmo that her visit to the hermitage was intended to obtain information rather than salutary advice.

This led him to a recollection of what Lusignan had said to him in their last short interview; the precipitate manner in which he left him was now partly explained; and Anselmo was satisfied that he had acted wisely.

“It is not for me,” said the hermit, “to enquire into the causes which may have induced

the noble Orsini to give immediate sanction to the proposal of Manero ; but the whole of his domestic conduct has proved him to be a kind and indulgent parent, and——”

“ Our father is no tyrant,” interrupted Livia ; “ but his too easy nature induces him to listen to the suggestions of those who are not equally interested in our welfare. Why were we not consulted before a definitive answer was given ? ”

“ It is needless to revert to the past unless to correct our own errors,” replied Anselmo. “ In other respects we should not consider what might have been, but what is. The word of Octavio is given, and he cannot in honour retract it. I am convinced you are too honourable yourself to wish it. Show the greatness of mind which report gives you ; and be not outdone in generosity by Sir Guy de Lusignan.”

“ And how has Sir Guy de Lusignan, in the present instance, shown his generosity ? ” enquired the agitated Livia.

“ In tearing himself,” said the hermit, “ from the chief whom he loves with filial tenderness ; from the friends whom he esteems, and from scenes and events which might cause him to betray the secret sentiments of his soul.”

“ The secret sentiments of his soul ! ” repeated Livia : “ and what are those sentiments ? ”

“ Lady,” said the hermit gravely, “ I have long observed, and Sir Guy was too ingenuous to

deny, his attachment to your sister. He has avoided the danger without endeavouring to disturb her peace of mind. The sacrifice is worthy of him; and the consciousness of acting nobly will support him through the trials on which he enters, because it will assure him of higher protection than all this world can afford."

Livia stood motionless. She had feared; but was not certain of the truth, which now blazed forth to her affrighted view. The hermit continued,—

"Lady! what I have just said is a proof of the confidence which I feel in the discretion and in the generosity of her to whom I am speaking. She will, I am sure, be silent. She will not betray the secret of the companion of her youth to the person most concerned in it; nor to any other. It is safe in her breast, and may I not also hope that she will attend to the words I have spoken in favour of filial obedience. If she listen to them, they will fall as blessings on her head; and, inspired by the example of her virtues, Pietro Manero may prove the honour of his house and of his country."

At the moment Livia felt almost disposed to adopt the line of conduct pointed out to her. Too high-minded to nourish a hopeless passion, she thought of manifesting her indifference by giving her hand to Manero; and she was not insensible to the motive suggested by the hermit;

resentment against Julia, however, arose in her mind, and she replied,—

“No Anselmo. Let others submit, if it so please and beseem them. What have I to do with the conduct of others? My determinations are unalterable; and, if no one plead my cause, or care for my happiness, I must exert myself, and assert my independence.”

The hermit smiled, and said, “At your age, lady, these are strong expressions; but at all ages we have duties to fulfil; and mine at this moment is to advise you to let your will become subservient to that of your father; or at least to use every effort to render it so. Ask of him to give you time to prepare your mind for so great a change. Time often does much, and reason more. The evils that we dread are perhaps averted; or we learn to endure them better than we expected. Follow the simple path of duty and you will at least avoid self-reproach.”

“Self-reproach would be my portion were I to consent,” said Livia. “For whom could I blame but myself; if, while I had the power of resisting, I should render myself miserable by tamely submitting to the will of others?”

The hermit felt himself hardly authorized to say more; and in reply to her last assertion, he repeated his former warning; only adding that he conjured her neither to listen to resentment nor to partiality; to deliberate coolly on her situation, and to recommend herself humbly and fervently

to Him who could enlighten and support her. He then called Vincenza, took leave of his guest, and withdrew to the interior of the hermitage ; where, reflecting on what had passed, he could not help feeling compassion for the lofty mind which he had endeavoured to convince of its error.

This led him to reflections on the conduct of Seraphina, who, devoting herself to the performance of what she considered a sacred obligation, allowed herself not even to question the justice of a proceeding which devoted her to wretchedness ; for he firmly believed that her mind was congenial with that of Lusignan, of whom he thought with painful interest.

Anselmo felt more than ever the necessity of directing his attention to other cares, and, having been prevented by the visit of Livia from making enquiry respecting the foundling, as he had intended for the first employment of the morning he now set forth to seek the cottage of Peppo ; where on his arrival he found the wife busily occupied with her new charge, and Peppo related to him that, when at dawn, he first opened his door, he found a paper, which he showed him. It was written apparently by the same hand which had traced the former, recommended the strictest secrecy, and promised ultimately a great reward.

The child was a beautiful and healthy boy, and Anselmo looked at him with great attention ; but could not discover any thing in his dress or

features that could lead to any probable conjecture. The promise of reward to the cottager in the second note, as the appeal to compassion in the first, only tended to prove the interest taken by the person who dropped them : who that person was could not be traced. If they were strangers on a pilgrimage to Rome, which was the natural conclusion to be formed from the habit of the woman, was it likely that one of the party should be capable of writing these notes, and at the same time of leaving a dying woman and an infant to the charity of others ? The mystery seemed to be inexplicable ; but Anselmo, who never lost time in searching to discover what it was unnecessary to know, turned his prompt thoughts to the child alone. He advised the cottagers not to expect more than the few, who were acquainted with the circumstance, since the child was found, were capable of doing for him ; and therefore to bring him up as they would one of their own, paying no farther attention to what was said in the writing, than observing silence on the manner in which he was found, and every occurrence relative to him. Peppo and his wife promised to observe his directions and to communicate them to Vincenza whom they expected that day. They cheerfully added the nursling to their family, and Anselmo, after making them a moderate donation and assuring them that he would often see them, returned contented to Saint Angelo.

Meanwhile Livia and her attendant proceeded to the castle. Silent and thoughtful, she made no answer to the questions of Vincenza, who was anxious to know what effect her conversation with Anselmo had produced. She was displeased with herself for the partiality which she had manifested to Lusignan on the day of his departure; for she had hoped that the apparent indifference of her sister would have rendered his heart accessible to her power; and she now saw that he was not to be moved. She felt indignant at the influence of Julia, and disappointed wherever she turned for assistance. She conceived that nothing now remained for her but to throw herself at the feet of Octavio, and endeavour to soften him in her favour.

She allowed herself no time to ponder or reflect on the resolution; but instantly flew to the apartment of Orsini, and on her knees implored him, not to grant her a delay, as the hermit had recommended, but to break off the treaty of marriage with the elder grandson of Manero.

Surprised to see her in this posture, and to hear language so different from what the representations of Julia had taught him to expect, he said all he could to convince her of the inconvenience to which she exposed him. He expostulated with her for assuming an independence unsuitable to her age and her sex; but all was in vain. She persisted in her demand, and would

not rise till her father had given her a promise that he would do all he could, consistently with his honour, to save her from an union so repugnant to her feelings.

She gratefully acknowledged his kindness; but Julia, who was soon made acquainted with what had passed, was enraged and resolved to counteract it. She had lost all influence with Livia; and she knew that the efforts of Seraphina had been exerted in vain. She reproached Octavio for his imprudent compassion; but he saw that he had been deceived by her representations, and lamented that he had not spoken with his daughters before he had gone too far. With a frankness natural to his disposition he was now resolved that he would visit Andrea Manero, and impart to him the difficulties under which he laboured.

The old man listened to him with great attention, but without an atom of participation in his feelings. He told him that had objections been found against his youngest grandson, he might perhaps have been able to induce him to relinquish his claim; but that Pietro had too high a sense of his own merit to give up the right which he had acquired; that he had conquered a former attachment to offer his hand to Livia, whom he admired; and that he would consider her rejection of him as a personal affront.

Octavio, though by no means pleased with this

cold and haughty answer, continued to reason with Andrea on the welfare of their children. He lamented the disinclination of his eldest daughter to fulfil the engagement which he had contracted in her name ; but he represented how little chance of happiness there could be for Pietro Manero with a woman who refused him in a manner so peremptory, and whose affections were probably devoted to another. He said there were many Barons' daughters who would gladly receive the addresses of one so distinguished in person and in exploits ; and that for his sake no less than for that of Livia, it would be more prudent to give up the point. He then added that the marriage of Seraphina and Mario would equally cement the union of the families.

This proposal, reasonable as it might appear, suited neither the policy of Andrea nor the pride of Pietro. The former aimed at nothing short of the direction of Octavio's councils and the management of his affairs, two points which he could attain only by preventing any other connexion. As to Pietro, he had in fact been struck with the figure and beauty of Livia, not considering it possible that any woman, whom he distinguished, could reject him.

The brothers entered during the conversation which passed between Octavio and Andrea. They enquired the subject of it ; Pietro was enraged ; and the manner, in which he expressed himself on

the occasion, defeated his own purposes; for it roused the chivalrous spirit of Orsini, and he broke up the conference with indignant precipitation. Andrea endeavoured to soften their reciprocal anger, but in vain; and to his great concern, as well as that of Mario, Octavio left Saracinesco with evident disgust and resentment.

On his return to his residence, the first thing reported to him was that Alessandro Massimo, on his way to Rome, had been stopped and plundered by robbers, who were supposed to be natives of Ampiglione. This intelligence gave him the more pain as he was not on friendly terms with Massimo, and that he might be suspected of encouraging, or at least of conniving at, this lawless enterprise. His generous heart revolted from such a suspicion, but he knew that it might be entertained in times when civil dissention, and jealous rivalry were capable of promoting every unworthy action. He ordered the strictest search to be made for the delinquents; but he could gain no information relative to their persons. The good nature of Octavio, which so often degenerated into improper lenity, had in some instances led him to be less severe than he ought in punishing offences of this nature. Impunity had given encouragement to the rapacious and vindictive spirit of the age, and it was now become very

difficult to repress or to restrain it within any any bounds.

Alessandro sent a messenger to complain of the injury, and to demand that the guilty persons should be given up to him or consigned to instant punishment. Neither of these requisitions could be fulfilled, for the robbers were not to be found, nor were any traces of the booty to be discovered.

Conciliatory embassies were sent to San Vito, but they were received with little respect, and still less cordiality. Massimo answered that he suffered no depredations to be committed on his states, and expected equal security when he passed through those of other Barons, whether friends or enemies.

Octavio felt more and more the loss of his young companion in arms, and regretted that he had suffered him to depart. He knew that he might have prevented it by sending immediately to Porto d'Anzo, which was mentioned as the place of his intended embarkation. He interrogated Livia as to his supposed sentiments; and she nobly and honourably justified him, without hinting his attachment to her sister. During the short visit to Saracinesco, Octavio had seen enough of Pietro Manero to consider his daughter's refusal of him in a more favourable light than Julia wished him to adopt; for she was most anxious to resume the treaty, and urged Se-

raphina to renew her good offices with her sister.

Too much time had elapsed for Orsini to entertain a thought that Fortebraccio had not sailed; but he again spoke to Livia, and expressed his regrets on this subject. He observed the interest which she took in it, and he said "Livia! speak to me with confidence. Had Sir Guy de Lusignan been proposed instead of Pietro Manero would you have accepted him?"

Livia blushed; but she had presence of mind to answer without hesitation. "Much as I esteem Sir Guy, and much as I dread Signor Pietro Manero, were I under the necessity of accepting one or the other, it should be the latter."

As she uttered these words Julia entered the room, and enquired the cause of the astonishment visible on the countenance of Octavio; which he unfortunately explained to her as his daughter left him on her entrance. She availed herself of the circumstance, gave him to understand that there was more of caprice than real dislike in the refusal of Livia, as she had always assured him; and announced to him the arrival of Mario Manero.

This young man was sent by his grandfather to renew the negotiation and also to apologize for the violence of his brother. He attributed it to the severe disappointment which he had ex-

perienced, spoke of his undiminished attachment to the Lady Livia, and assured Octavio that he was sorry for what he had said. He pleaded his cause as well as his own with a warmth of expression not displeasing to a father who wished to see his children united to men who felt their worth. Orsini's opinion was staggered, and he listened to all that could be said in favour of Pietro.

This was instantly perceived by Julia; and as she was always precipitate, and solely occupied with the success of her own views, she thought this an excellent opportunity for securing the compliance of Seraphina, who, she was well aware, acted only from a motive of duty. She officiously sought her in her apartment, told her that there was a ray of hope for the prevention of all the miseries of discord and bloodshed, and hurried her into the presence of Octavio, already softened in favour of the house of Manero by the protestations and entreaties of Mario. They were now renewed with redoubled force, and Octavio was overcome. He took the hand of Seraphina, and placed it in that of Mario. She made no resistance, and Orsini was at the moment too agitated to observe the deathlike paleness that overspread her countenance, or the shiver that convulsed her frame. The happy Mario was all gratitude and hope. He conjured her to use every endeavour to render his brother as fortunate if possible, as

himself, and Julia confirmed his hopes by saying that Livia had recently declared that she would more willingly accept the hand of Pietro than that of any other who might be proposed to her.

Octavio was displeased with this mistatement of his daughter's words, and the surprise of Seraphina was great. Julia corrected herself, and said, "In the excess of joy which I feel at this moment, I may have repeated her words with some inaccuracy; but I am sure she spoke of giving her hand in preference to your brother."

"For that I will not answer," said Octavio with more firmness than he usually assumed: "but I will consent to pass over the rash and improper conduct of Signor Pietro at Saracinesco, in consideration of his love for my daughter, if she manifest no farther repugnance."

Mario joyfully promised to bring his brother on the following day, and hastened back to the residence of his grandfather, elated with the success of his visit at Ampiglione. He failed however of meeting with the approbation which he expected. "You have engaged yourself rashly," said Andrea, "for should the eldest daughter of Orsini persist in her obstinate rejection of your brother, I cannot approve your union with the other. You have exceeded your commission and involved us in fresh difficulties."

“ Difficulties,” exclaimed Pietro, “ are only experienced by those who have not courage to conquer them. Mario has done well, and Livia shall be mine whether she yield a reluctant, or a more gracious, consent.”

CHAPTER X.

ON the following day, both the brothers appeared at Ampiglione, attended by knights and squires, sumptuously habited, and almost vying in splendour with Octavio's court. He took Pietro by the hand, after a slight apology on his part, and assured him that all traces of what had passed at their last interview were effaced from his mind. Harmony was once more restored, and the behaviour of Pietro was all that could be wished. Fabio, with officious zeal, at the suggestion of Julia, had prepared the marriage contracts, which were displayed ready for signature; and Octavio had been taught to believe that the opposition of Livia was at an end.

Julia went to the sisters, and told them that all was ready ; that they were expected in the hall, and that Octavio relied on the maintenance of their promises. Seraphina looked anxiously at Livia, whose countenance was unmoved, and who spoke not a word. She, however, made a sign that she would go with them ; and they proceeded in silence to the great hall, thronged with knights and ladies, whom Julia had invited. They passed through it to the chamber of the canopy, under which stood Octavio and his guests.

A smile of proud exultation appeared on the face of the elder Manero, as he saw the ladies approach. The pen was offered to him by Fabio, with an obsequious bow ; but, before his hand could reach it, Livia, in a grave and solemn tone, addressed him to the following purport :

“Signor Pietro Manero, I neither mean to derogate from your merits, nor to disdain an alliance with your house : but if you have been told that I accepted your proposal, you have been deceived. I assert the independence of my affections : and I am obliged to take this method of announcing to you that I will not be misunderstood ; much less, that I will not be compelled to follow the dictates of those who have no right over me.”

As she said this, she cast a severe glance at Julia, and made her way through the crowd to

her own apartment. The company remained thunderstruck ; and it were difficult to say, whether the indignation of Pietro or that of Octavio were the greatest. Seraphina could scarcely support herself, and Mario's anger was roused for the moment ; but he was not unmindful of his own happiness. He was about to take the pen in his hand, when his brother violently caught his arm, and said, " No Mario ! contracts avail not, where the faithless make a sport of their word. We will have recourse to surer means : to measures more consonant with the lofty spirit of our ancestors."

Thus saying, he dragged Mario from the room ; and, without listening to the voice of Julia, who was attempting an explanation ; or taking leave of Octavio, he summoned his knights, and left the castle with looks of defiance.

Mario followed his brother dejected, and unable to resist the impulse of his resentment. He, indeed, loved him too well not to be hurt by the insult offered to him, in a manner so public, and so unexpected.

Octavio, displeased, as he justly was, at the scene which the conduct of Livia had occasioned, and disgusted with the rude impetuosity of Pietro, was still more deeply wounded by this complete discovery of Julia's duplicity. The veil, which had so long concealed it, was now drawn

aside, and he could no longer feel confidence or esteem, while he yet preserved affection.

She considered as the perfection of human wisdom and prudence that mysterious policy exercised by her even in trifles. She never took the straight path to arrive at what she wanted, and she often lost her way in the mazes of dissimulation. She frequently defeated her own purposes, by thinking it wise to appear indifferent as to objects which she was ardently pursuing; and, instead of frankly communicating what she was about, when it was necessary for the success of her plans to prepare those who were concerned in their accomplishment. She liked to take them by surprise, and to leave them, as she imagined, no possibility of escape. By this mode of proceeding, she was the chief cause of all the present misery and impending evil; involving herself, as well as others, in the dangers which threatened the house of Orsini. She had certainly deceived the artful Andrea, no less than the open-hearted Octavio; and on this talent, which she possessed, it must be owned in an eminent degree, she valued herself, as a proof of superior understanding, whereas it rarely tended to accomplish any thing but mischief and confusion.

The unsuspecting temper of Orsini, when once convinced of having been deceived, was highly indignant; and she had no way of paci-

fyng him but by acting on his feelings, by reviving the remembrance of their lost infant, and by professions of the most devoted attachment, while she recalled to his memory the virtues and services of Sinibaldo. Tenderness and compassion pleaded in her favour, and he assured her of his forgiveness, though he could not forget that he had been misled by her false representations.

He reasonably attributed to this cause much of the apparent inconsistency in Livia's conduct; but her appearance at the proposed signature of the contracts, and the manner in which she addressed Pietro, were contrary to all his notions of feminine gentleness and propriety. He therefore commanded that she should not appear in his presence, and deprived himself of the satisfaction which he derived from the society of his children, by permitting Seraphina to remain with her sister.

"Dearest Livia," she said to her when they were alone, "why not tell me thy decided intentions? I would have taken all on myself; I would have met the anger of Pietro, and I would have tried to soften that of my father. I was myself astonished; for I still hoped thy love for me might have induced thee to share my fate."

Livia was moved by this affectionate address; but she replied that her repugnance to the union arose, not merely from her dislike to Pietro, but from a resolution not to yield to the despotic will

of Julia. Seraphina conjured her to think of her father, whom she had rendered most unhappy, and to whom the consequences might be fatal.

As she spoke, Vincenza entered. She had been at San Vito on the preceding day to see her father, and was just returned. She enquired what had passed at the castle, and in what manner the brothers had been received, as she had departed at break of day. She was affrighted when she learned the truth, as she said that she was perfectly certain that Alessandro Massimo was making secret preparations, and only waited for a total rupture between the Lord of Ampiglione and the Manero family, to enter into a treaty with the latter. Pietro, she was sure, from the first moment, was intent on revenge, and had been over at San Vito to confer with the offended Massimo. She said she had heard many things that alarmed her, and she lamented not having heard them sooner, as she would have warned the Lady Livia not to be so rash.

At this Livia expressed some indignation: "Of what avail," said she, "are the advantages possessed by the house of Orsini? The power, the strength, and the military talents of my father, if we are always to be trembling at the menaces of our insolent neighbours? Why should they not be more fearful of us than we of them?"

Seraphina flew to Octavio to communicate the intelligence brought by Vincenza; at the same

time interceding for her sister, and imploring his forgiveness of her.

Julia interrupted her, by declaring that she had always predicted misfortune; and that she was not surprised that the family of Manero should have been desirous, in the first instance, of revenging the affront which they had received. Still, she added, there was some hope of reconciliation, till the scene of the preceding day. She had done all in her power to bring about an event so desirable. She had no reproach to cast on herself; but now all was over, and they who were to blame must abide the consequences.

“I will abide them fearlessly,” returned Octavio, with a spirit becoming his character; “and I can more easily forgive my eldest daughter, for acting in a manner which I disapproved, than myself, for having pronounced too precipitately what I should have weighed with the utmost caution. The die is now cast; retrospection is useless; and we must defend ourselves.”

Thus saying, he enquired more minutely into the intelligence brought from San Vito: he wrote to the neighbouring chiefs, who were his friends or relations; he held a counsel of Bannerets, and the most distinguished amongst his knights; and made preparations for the defence of his city with as much speed and secrecy as could be observed on the occasion. All this was done without confusion or appearance of hostile intentions.

He continued to make researches for apprehending, if possible, the depredators, and seemed now to regret only the absence of Lusignan.

Letters from Porto d'Anzo had already informed him of the departure of the young warrior for Marseilles, and his heart felt a void which he sought to fill by restoring concord in his domestic circle. He again admitted Livia to his presence, and endeavoured to bring about a reconciliation between her and Julia; in which he was warmly seconded by his youngest daughter. There could be no cordiality; but the appearance of affection on the one hand, and of respect on the other, was re-established.

Octavio informed them of the preparations made to render void the attempts of his enemies, in case they should seek, by fraud or force, to disturb the tranquillity of his castle. He said that the character of Alessandro Massimo was so much above dissimulation that he could not believe him capable of base suspicion, "and yet," added he, with that candour, which always induced him to put the best construction on the actions of men, "it is not astonishing that he should be alive to every, even the slightest injury, from persons belonging to the house of Orsini. You must have heard what he suffered from one of our kinsmen, and the melancholy events of which that suffering was the cause. Less forgiving than thy father, Livia! he could

not brook from his daughter any opposition to his will, and his temper has been rendered more irritable by the sad effects of her imprudence, and of his vindictive spirit."

Livia coloured: but made no reply. Seraphina answered that she had heard something of the story, but very imperfectly told.

"It is this," continued Orsini, "and it pains me to recollect it; for I contributed, in some measure, though unintentionally, to these misfortunes. You have heard me say that I was educated by my uncle, the Cardinal, after the death of my father, and that I remained with him at Rome till my marriage, when I came to inhabit Ampiglione, for the greater portion of the year: previous to that event, I met a young Knight of an interesting countenance and polished manners, who was introduced to the Cardinal as a relation of our family. He was, in fact, the son of the celebrated Count of Gravina, chief of that branch of our lineage which was settled in the kingdom of Naples, and famed throughout Europe and Asia for his knowledge, his virtues, and his intrepidity. He was then in Siria, where the youth was to rejoin him, after being made known to his father's relatives in Rome; for the Count de Gravina, being connected by marriage with one of the Christian princes in Siria, his son was there born and brought up, and was unknown, as yet, in the country of his ancestors."

“One of the early friends of his father was Alessandro Massimo, for they had served together under the banners of the Emperor Frederick; and to him also the young stranger was to be introduced. I felt a great attraction towards my kinsman, three or four years younger than myself; but endowed with more knowledge and acquirements than I could boast. I offered to accompany him to San Vito, where Massimo then was with his family, and we were received with dignified hospitality. Massimo spoke of the father in terms of high esteem; but without the warmth of friendship; and his reception of the son was less cordial than he expected. Me, on the contrary, he received in the most distinguished manner; a contrast for which I could not account at that moment, though it was afterwards clearly explained to me.”

“Alessandro had an only daughter, named Camilla, then in the sixteenth year of her age, and one of the most beautiful creatures I ever beheld. My possessions lying almost contiguous to those of her father, he would not have been unwilling to call me his son-in-law. I will not deny that she made some impression on me; but far greater was that which her soft and timid graces produced on my companion. It is needless to detail minutely the dreams of youth, and painful to recapitulate scenes and conversations that terminated in calamity: suffice it to say, that, after

our visit to San Vito, my kinsman became for some time my guest at Ampiglione, with permission from the Cardinal, to whom his father had addressed him. His attachment to Camilla, which it was impossible for me not to observe, he now frankly confessed; and he conjured me to support his application to Massimo. He assured me that it would be sanctioned by his father's approbation: we were both young, and I not only sacrificed the inclination which I began to feel for Camilla, but the dictates of reason and prudence, which should have taught me to consult older and wiser heads than my own, before I proceeded farther in this business. I thought of nothing but Damon and Pythias, Orestes and Pylades; and, with all the warmth of romantic friendship, I applied to Massimo in favour of the young Orsini. He returned a cold denial; and, he added, "had you pleaded for yourself, Octavio, I might, perhaps, have listened to you; but your interference on behalf of another offends me: I esteem his father, it is true, but he is now an inhabitant of distant regions; and he no longer supports the party in which we were both engaged. His Italian possessions are neglected, and will soon become the prey of those who look nearer home for adventures than Siria or Arabia. There can no longer be any sympathy between us, though I honor his virtues, and admire his heroic actions."

“Finding,” continued Octavio, “that I could hope for no success in pursuing the theme, I took leave of Massimo, and used every argument in my power to cure my young relation of his unfortunate passion. He was too honourable to involve me in a rash enterprise; and I was ignorant of his intentions; but he found means to obtain several interviews with Camilla. Young and thoughtless, and enthusiastic as himself, she consented to leave her father’s house, to accompany her lover to the chapel of a neighbouring monastery, and there disguised like him as a peasant, exchange with him the sacred vows of marriage.”

“I have often heard of this,” said Julia: “but at what chapel did their union take place?”

“It matters little,” answered Octavio; “nor do I know exactly. I believe it might be Valle Cotta: this I know, that immediately after the ceremony they returned to San Vito, where they threw themselves at the feet of Alessandro, supplicating forgiveness and his blessing. He was inexorable, and in the first moments of his anger he threatened them with all that an offended parent’s vengeance could inflict. They fled from his presence; and being informed that they were closely pursued, and that it was the intention of Massimo to confine them in separate towers, they went to Marseilles, where they embarked for Palestine; but, alas! they reached not their destination. Their vessel was wrecked in sight of Damietta.

Both perished together in the waves scarcely three months after their ill-omened marriage. Their bodies were thrown on the coast; and when I was in Siria, I saw the simple stone, erected to their memory, by a charitable stranger, who buried them in the same grave."

"Sad indeed is the story!" exclaimed Seraphina, "but how did the noble Gravina receive the fatal news?"

"It is some comfort to believe," replied her father; "that he was spared this severe affliction; for he fell in the defence of Jaffa: and, as far as we might calculate, he could not have learned the calamity which had befallen him. All died with him; his race is extinct, his treasures became the prey of the conquering infidels, and nought remains of him but his deathless fame."

Octavio spoke with great emotion, and his heart seemed oppressed with a foreboding sadness. Livia had attentively listened to the tale of woe; but had not spoken: she now asked whether Octavio had heard what impression was made on Massimo by the tragical end of those whom he had persecuted?"

"Some minds," said Orsini, "are softened by affliction, while others are irritated. Of the latter description is that of Alessandro. He cannot brook the disappointment of his hopes, nor the solitude of his house. He has no other child, and his large possessions must go to distant relatives. The name of Orsini is hateful to him."

Octavio here paused, and seemed to revolve in his mind the painful remembrances; but he recovered himself, and with a more cheerful aspect he continued: "Be not uneasy. Let what will happen, we shall be prepared, and that is sufficient. I would fain live in peace with those around me, the subjects of the same Prince, the professors of the same faith; but I must meet with firmness what I cannot ward off with honor."

It was only in military affairs that any firmness was to be seen in the character of Orsini. On occasions of this nature he was all that his warmest friends could desire, and all that his enemies could redoubt.

CHAPTER XI.

VINCENZA had been correct in the information which she gave; and she found means of being apprised how matters went on at San Vito. She received intelligence of a meditated attack on Ampiglione, and Octavio had similar advice through other channels.

Night after night however passed away without the appearance of an enemy; and doubts began to be entertained of the reality of the intention. Julia complained of the unjust suspicions which she pretended were cast on the Manero family: and forgot that while the treaty of marriage was yet pending, she had predicted every possible evil from their indignation in case of a refusal.

Octavio would allow no relaxation of discipline or watchfulness; and at length, on a dark tempestuous night, which succeeded a series of clear weather, the distant trampling of horses was heard; and as the sound gradually increased, all was activity and impatience for the contest.

The vassals of Orsini were brave and vigorous warriors, when called together for any particular action or purpose; but no dependence could be placed on them as regular soldiers: accustomed to desultory warfare, and fond of predatory excursions, they could be only kept within the bounds of discipline by remaining under the immediate eye of their commander, which being at present the case within the walls of Ampiglione, they offered a formidable phalanx to oppose the invading enemy.

The situation of the sisters was truly painful. Octavio removed them with Julia, now more alarmed, if possible, than they, to that part of the castle which he thought least exposed to the attacks of the enemy. Here they were to await the event of the combat; and perhaps nothing is more trying, or requires greater firmness of mind than such inaction. Where danger is to be met by resistance, our attention is taken up by the necessity of acting, and our courage is supported by exertion; but to sit waiting for the decision on which seems to depend, not only our present lot of comfort or misery, but the fate of all those most dear to us—and perhaps all our future prospects

in this world, requires an equanimity or a resignation of the will rarely to be found in mortals even of the stronger sex.

Livia was persecuted by the reproaches of Julia; and still more by the consciousness of being in great measure the cause of the present confusion and danger. She could not help reflecting with grief on the haughty independence of her words and actions; and she considered that, as her obstinate rejection of Pietro Manero, now exposed her to the peril of falling into his power, so her marked partiality for Lusignan was the chief cause of his absence. These maddening thoughts she endeavoured to drive from her mind by casting the blame on her step-mother; who however was insensible to the harm which she had done, and who still thought her own penetration the clearest, her own plans the most wise, and her own misfortunes by far the greatest of all that were inflicted on the family.

Seraphina had no self-reproach to embitter her reflections; but she trembled for her father, whose dauntless courage would lead him, she well knew, to encounter every danger. As to herself, she could scarcely avoid rejoicing in any event tending to retard the fulfilment of her engagement with Mario; and if she regretted the absent Lusignan, as a powerful defender of Octavio, she secretly felt relieved from the cares which she would have experienced for his safety.

Caressed by Julia in opposition to her sister, she was more hurt by those demonstrations of affection than she had ever been by her neglect, and she bestowed all her attention in trying to console and encourage the afflicted and impatient Livia.

While thus engaged, the confused sounds that attend a combat convinced them but too clearly that the assault had commenced. The point to which it was principally directed was the entrance of the gardens; to which there was a rapid ascent on one side of the hill, in a different direction from that of the avenues. A small body of the enemy had indeed advanced by the direct road from Saracinesco, as a feint to draw the attention of the defenders towards that line of approach; but the main strength of the assailing forces had wheeled round to the place we have described, and, climbing the hill, expected an easy conquest.

Octavio had taken care to station some of his best soldiers beneath the evergreen oaks which shaded the extensive walls of these gardens. The information received through Vincenza pointed peculiarly to this direction. She had overheard the words—"we shall have none but old Bartolomeo to oppose us;" and this was sufficient intelligence. The event proved that she was not mistaken. Pietro was here, attended by his squire, the very person whom she had heard at

San Vito, whispering to one of Massimo's people the sentence above mentioned. Pietro headed a chosen band devoted to his service, and entrusted with the secret of his real intentions.

Alessandro Massimo, to whom the chief command had been assigned, was at the head of the main body of troops, and took Pietro with him to guide the enterprize on the garden side, from his knowledge of the place, leaving Mario, with the few under his orders, to entice Octavio in an opposite direction. His plan was to gain possession of the castle by what he thought no difficult manœuvre, and to envelop Octavio and his forces in the square. Pietro, however, without naming his views to Massimo, or even to his brother, instructed his band to enter the apartments and carry off the ladies, whose windows looked towards the gardens.

Massimo soon found that the Lord of Ampiglione was prepared for his reception; and a desperate combat ensued, in which Pietro joined with his usual valour; but when he found that victory was at least doubtful, it occurred to him that he should not only lose the object of his enterprize, but return with disgrace, if he did not alter his measures. He therefore made a private signal to his people, and, leaving Massimo opposed to Octavio, he went round by the walls, intending to join his brother, and enter the city

by what he now supposed to be the least defended quarter.

As he passed beneath that part of the castle, which was situated on the steepest brow of the hill, he perceived lights, and female forms at a window. He was struck with an idea that the ladies had been removed to what was thought a safer apartment than their own. Active and bold, he suddenly resolved to climb the ascent, and with a ladder of ropes, which his men had brought by his directions, to scale the wall, and enter the windows. In this desperate attempt he only chose his squire and two others to attend him, giving orders to the rest of his band to keep guard below. All things succeeded to his wish, and he reached the window purposely left unbarred by one of Livia's attendants, who was in his interest. He entered, followed by his three assistants, and proceeded with them to the inner rooms.

The astonishment and horror of the sisters is not to be described; they knew not whence he came, and naturally concluded that all was lost. Pietro artfully favoured this notion to his own advantage by giving them to understand that the castle was in his power. Livia, already penitent, and anxious for her father's safety, asked with a faltering voice,—“Does my father live?”

“For aught I know,” replied the haughty youth. “I expected your willing hand; but I

must seize it how I may. Follow me instantly; for I have no time for words."

"Will you promise peace and forbearance if I give you my hand?" said the distracted Livia. Pietro made no other answer than dragging her to the door, and through the apartments, till they arrived at the windows, to which was suspended the ladder of ropes. He carried her forcibly down it, and in the same manner, at the risk of destruction to her and himself, he descended with her the precipice; for such might justly be called the almost perpendicular side of the hill. His three followers with difficulty kept their footing as they endeavoured to assist him in supporting her.

When they had reached the bottom, Pietro consigned the lady in charge to them, gave them orders to mount her on one of the led horses, and to carry her respectfully to a place of safety. "I would fain," said he, "have removed the other also; but I must return to my post. No man shall say that Pietro Manero avoided a battle for the sake of a woman."

The consternation occasioned by his sudden appearance, and by the rapidity of his action, rendered Julia, Seraphina, and the woman who attended them, all equally incapable of giving the slightest assistance, or offering the least impediment to the departure of Livia. Julia ran shrieking through the rooms; Seraphina, pale and

motionless, had not power to speak; and when the guards, brought to their succour by the cries of Julia, arrived and enquired what had happened, no certain account could be given of this extraordinary transaction. The guards tranquilized the ladies as to the safety of the castle, and assured them that the combat was likely to end in the repulse of the enemy; that Octavio was unhurt, and encouraging every one, and that the Lady Livia would soon be recovered.

Seraphina began now to conjecture how the entrance of Pietro was effected. She flew to the windows, and at last discovered one left open, and the cords still hanging to it. She could, however, see no one moving beneath the hill. The night was dark, and the projecting angle of the building intercepted also the view beyond a certain distance.

The cries of Livia were heard by some of the sentinels on the walls; for though Pietro endeavoured to stop them, he would not entirely cover her face for fear of stifling her. The alarm was given, and re-echoed by the men called to the assistance of Julia. Headed by one of Lusignan's knights, to whom Octavio had entrusted the care of this part of the castle, they sallied forth from one of the posterns in pursuit of the daring Baron and his prize; but the wonderful celerity with which the attempt had been carried into execution, baffled their zealous endeavours.

There was a grove of cypress trees, intermixed with a few pines, at the distance of about a hundred yards from the eastern battlements. It was here that Pietro had left palfreys for the ladies, whom it was always, as we have said, his intention to carry off. Thither he conducted the affrighted Livia, whom in a few hasty words he assured of honourable treatment, placed her on one of the palfreys, and committed the reins to one of the servants who were to attend her, while the two men, who entered the castle with him and his squire, were to be their guards. He threw his own cloak over her; for the night was dreadful. The howling winds and torrents of rain were accompanied by vivid flashes of lightning and tremendous peals of thunder. In securing the cloak, Pietro took care to prevent all possibility of Livia throwing herself from the palfrey, and ordered his men to make the best of their way with her to Saracinesco.

“We are scarcely safe from pursuit,” said the Squire; “and if they come not up with us sooner, they will immediately follow to Saracinesco; would it not be better to take the advice of Antonio, who has a kinsman at San Vito, and pursue that unsuspected road to place the lady in safety?”

“Massimo will never forgive it,” answered Pietro; “his notions are too chivalrous.”

“He need not know it,” replied the Squire. “He is absent. The Lady will not be seen; and when you come, you may dispose of her as you think best.”

“Well, well,” said Pietro, “I must away. Massimo will accuse me of deserting him.” At that instant, in an interval of the dreadful noise of wind and thunder, they heard the pursuers on the road. “We must face them,” exclaimed Pietro to the Squire, and then turning to another man:—“Antonio!” he said, “to San Vito! Be swift, be secret, and doubt not thy reward.”

Antonio lost no time; and, less scrupulous than his master, he forcibly stopped the screams of Livia. He placed her between the two servants, who were well mounted, one of them holding her bridle, while the other rode as close as possible on the other side; Antonio and his companion guarding the rear. They were soon out of sight on their way to the residence of Massimo.

Pietro and his Squire, with a courage worthy a better cause, rode up boldly to the pursuers. His intention was to keep them in play until Antonio, with his prize, should be out of danger, and then to rejoin the combatants whom he had left. The darkness of the night he supposed to be in his favour; but he found that he had to do with antagonists who were not to be deceived, and who fought with determined valour.

They met in combat at a place where the road was narrow, having on one side the grove, from which Pietro descended, and on the other the castle walls. Seconded by his Squire, he could therefore defend the pass against the superior number of the enemy; and the first two who advanced towards him expired under his blows; but others succeeded the slain, and the Squire fell a victim to their indignation. Pietro could not long sustain the combat singly. He received several wounds; at length a blow levelled at him by a private soldier brought him to the ground, and put an end to the contest with his life. The Knight who commanded this small party, followed up the pursuit of Livia with some of his men, taking, as was natural, the road of Saracinesco, until their horses being exhausted, and no traces appearing of the flight, they returned to take farther orders from Octavio.

Mario Manero, who commanded the small body of combined forces, which was intended to attract the attention of the defenders to the quarter where he was posted, made his way without much difficulty into the great square; but, comprehending that success had not attended the principal attack, he wisely and bravely resolved to join Alessandro Massimo and his brother; and cut his way through the bands which opposed him in some disorder as he retraced his steps. The battle still raged, and the dawn presented a

dreadful spectacle ; for the loss on both sides was considerable. All fought with that animosity which civil discord creates, and disappointment exasperates. Octavio, opposed in single combat to Alessandro Massimo, after a desperate struggle, might have taken his life ; for the latter fought with more impetuosity than prudence, and he had received two wounds, one on his left arm, and the other on his neck, which, although slight, impeded his movements. Octavio's anger was sufficiently roused to make him pursue his advantage ; but as the faint light of the morning discovered to him the crest and shield of his adversary, he said to himself, " he would have been my father ;" and almost instantaneously turned his sword against other combatants.

The assailants perceived that they were completely foiled in their attempt, and sounded a retreat. They withdrew in good order, covered by the fresher troops of Mario, and the defendants were too much fatigued, and had suffered too much to follow them. The first rays of the sun illumined the mangled corpses of the victims of this rash enterprize ; and Orsini commanded that friends and foes should be decently interred, after thanking his brave companions for the support which they had given him.

During the engagement, he had sent several messages to inform Julia and his daughters of his well-being ; but in return no one had ventured to

tell him the loss of Livia. When he sought the apartment of the Ladies with a cheerful aspect, he was surprised to observe the different countenance with which they met him; but what were his indignation and dismay when he heard the fatal truth! He was told all the circumstances, so extraordinary in their nature, and so humiliating in their consequences. He instantly commanded his knights to prepare every thing for an expedition, and he resolved that, as soon as his troops should be refreshed, he would seek to recover his unhappy daughter, and to vindicate his insulted honour at the gates of Saracinesco.

Whilst these arrangements were making, and all was bustle and confusion, the knight with his party returned from their useless pursuit. He presented to Octavio the sword and shield of the ill-fated Pietro. The shield was easily recognized, and, struck with a generous feeling of compassion for a fallen enemy, he instantly commanded that his body, with that of his Squire, should be carried to his grandfather with respectful solemnity, and that it should be accompanied by a messenger of worth and honour, who should demand the restitution of Livia, and an atonement for the insult which had been offered to himself and to his family.

“Tell Manero,” said he to the messenger, “that not only I feel for his grief, and war not with the dead, but that I am willing to consider

him as guiltless of what has passed. I am disposed to attribute all to the impetuosity of youth ; and the offender has paid the forfeit of his rashness ; but my daughter must be immediately restored, and amends must be made to my people for the wrongs they have sustained. I speak not of myself. Accustomed to raise the banner of my ancient house against the enemies of our Pontiff, and of our common country, I wish to live on terms of amity with every Italian Baron, whether Guelph or Ghibeline, supporter of the house of Anjou, or of the fallen fortunes of Swabia. I am willing to have peace with Manero and his remaining grandson ; but, should they be so unwise as to reject my proffered amnesty, I announce to them unceasing hostility and devastation."

CHAPTER XII.

THE retreating army made a halt at the distance of two or three miles from Ampiglione, and the anxiety of Mario Manero at the absence of his brother was considerable. Massimo, wounded and indignant at the repulse which he had sustained, thought of nothing but revenge. He was, however, not less surprised, though less uneasy than Mario, and those among the followers of Pietro, who were most in his confidence, were unwilling to mention what they supposed to be the reason of his absence. They were at length joined by the men who so long waited for him under the walls, who witnessed his entrance into the castle, and who had received his orders to remain till he should rejoin them, and return to the combat. They could only suspect the evil

which had happened, and they imparted their suspicions to Mario alone, who was overwhelmed with redoubled anxiety.

“Signor Mario,” said Massimo, before they parted, “I understand not the conduct of your brother : but, while we are uncertain of his fate, we must not judge him. Courage he can never want; but if he sacrifice important interests to petty projects he is no ally for Alessandro.”

Thus separated the disappointed leaders; and Mario hastened to Saracinesco with a heart torn to pieces by various sorrows. He knew but too well the unmanageable temper of his brother, who yet had such an ascendancy over him, that neither his honour nor his interest had any weight in the balance, when opposed to the will and pleasure of Pietro. He had conceived such ideas of his superiority that blind obedience to his dictates appeared to him no more than a duty, and a trifling return of affection which he thought he could never sufficiently merit. That affection had indeed subsisted; for Pietro had a heart susceptible of strong attachment; but, imperious by nature, and unchecked by discipline, he had no other way of expressing his partiality for any one than by soliciting that person to accomplish his will, and by compelling him to adopt his ideas. Many were thus devoted to him. Nor is it strange that such should have been the case; for we usually see that they who assume an empire over the

minds of others, find more willing slaves than they who sacrifice their time and inclinations to the caprices of others, find friends or protectors in those whom they wish to please.

Mario, not being in the last instance entrusted with the design of his brother, was ignorant, it is true, of what had been attempted; but he was not unconscious of the notions which he entertained, and he could only account for his non-appearance by the suspicion of his having carried off their intended brides. Still his not returning to the battle made him uneasy; for even among banditti, and it must be owned the nobles of those times resembled them but too closely, there were laws of honour and of martial alliance. He was also alarmed at what he surmised on another account: for his attachment to Seraphina was of a nature somewhat more consonant to the purity of her character than that of his brother for Livia; and as he had just ground for believing that her engagement with him was entirely owing to her high sense of filial duty, he looked on every insult offered to the house of Orsini as an additional bar to their union. He had most unwillingly joined in the expedition against that castle where he had previously been so well received; but, as has been said, he could never refuse following where Pietro led the way.

Andrea, too, felt a decided partiality for his elder grandson, and when he saw Mario and the

troops return without him, he began to be greatly fearful of the consequences of the unsuccessful attack, and he dreaded the worst from the protracted absence of Pietro.

In the meanwhile the remains of this thoughtless and unfortunate young man were slowly approaching the castle of Saracinesco. The bearers were seen ascending the steep and rocky road which leads to its gates, and, as soon as the melancholy truth was known, the whole population of the place rushed out to meet its fallen idol; for, however wonderful it may appear, he was at once their pride, and their terror. His manly beauty, his profuse liberality, his daring courage, and his thoughtless vivacity, rendered the vassals of his grandfather often blind to the defects in his character, of which they were so frequently the victims. Their fear of his violence was tempered by their admiration of his spirit; and, now, when they beheld him a lifeless corpse, it seemed as if the light which had animated them were extinct.

Their cries and exclamations reached the ears of Andrea; and his foreboding heart announced the loss of him on whom he had founded all his ambitious hopes. He tore his white locks, threw himself on the ground, and uttered lamentations which would have pierced the soul of Octavio, or indeed of an enemy of much less gentle nature.

Mario was in his chamber, incapable of taking rest, and meditating sorrowfully on past events, when the fatal certainty of what he dreaded was conveyed to him. He ran towards the gate, and approached it at the moment when the body was deposited at the foot of an altar in a sort of chapel or nich adjoining to it in the wall. He threw himself on his knees beside the bier, wept bitterly, and while he gazed on the breathless form, every motion of which he had sought to imitate, and on the pale countenance which he had been accustomed to watch as an oracle, he was struck with a deep sense of the fatal consequences arising from a headstrong will, and indulged passions. He formed a secret wish to expiate his errors, and, as it were, to atone for his brother's faults by some great and meritorious sacrifice. Thus devoted to him even in death, he could not separate his higher interests from those of Pietro, although the mortal tie were broken. He collected himself and arose; wrapping his mantle around him, and covering his head with it. He then seated himself on the steps beside the bier, and waited till the clergy of Saracinesco came out chanting to receive the body, and convey it to the chapel of the castle. He attended the procession, and after the performance of this duty, he sought his wretched grandsire, whom he discovered, seated on the ground, strewed with his white hairs, and his eyes fixed in a

stare which inspired every beholder with horror.

As Mario approached, the attendants drew back ; but the old man appeared not to notice him. They retreated still farther, and he then stretched out his neck, while in a deep low tone, as Mario bent to hear what he had to say, he repeated twice the fearful word "Revenge !" and then sunk motionless.

In this state he was conveyed to his chamber, where he slowly recovered. The fatal word had chilled with horror the already miserable youth, and he now seemed to have lost all hope of returning happiness. As if he only survived to commit his brother to the grave of his ancestors, he gave with correctness the orders for a pompous funeral, assisted at it with pious respect, and then sunk into a state of despondency from which he was not to be roused.

The messenger of Octavio had in his company the attendants of Livia, and servants of the house to accompany her home when she should be restored. When they made their appearance at the gates, they were received in a manner so savage that they feared to enter the city ; Mario, on hearing this, assigned to them a Villa near the road, where they waited the event, and were accommodated by his care ; but the house was soon surrounded by the populace, reviling the people of Ampiglione and their Lord, and throwing stones

at the windows, if any of the servants showed themselves.

The messenger, however, insisted on telling his tale, and required safe conduct for that purpose ; but to whom was the message to be given ? No one dared to speak of it to Andrea Manero ; and Mario, after providing for the safety of the people, again sunk into melancholy silence.

At length the principal persons of the city were convoked, and a guard was sent to conduct the messenger to their presence. He repeated what he was commanded to say ; and they declared it impossible that the Lady should have been conveyed to Saracinesco without their knowledge.

During this time Andrea recovered from the paroxism occasioned by mingled grief and resentment, disappointment, and dismay. As soon as he became calm, he reflected on the circumstances which had taken place, and he began to consider whether he could not adopt some plan for the concealment of the disgrace with which his family was stained, ward off suspicion from himself, and not be forced to relinquish those ambitious hopes to which he was so tenaciously attached. In answer to his enquiry what had passed, he was informed that a messenger from Orsini arrived during the first agony of his grief, and had a conference with some of the chief inhabitants. With this last intelligence he was greatly displeas-

for, jealous of his power, and closely secret in his resolutions, he could not bear that any thing should be brought before the public eye without his own express command.

Manifesting therefore his disapprobation of what had been done, he sent to the messenger announcing his intention of seeing him in a few hours; and sat down to prepare himself for the interview.

He was now told that one of the female attendants of Livia, named Giovanna, had escaped from the villa and humbly requested protection in his castle. He recollected having carried on his correspondence with Julia through the hands of a woman known to Antonio. He remembered also that the name was Giovanna, and he concluded she must be the same person, equally employed by him in the service of Pietro. This was indeed the case; for she was privy to his intention of carrying off the Ladies; but, when she found they were to be removed to other apartments, she for a while despaired of the success of the enterprise. All she could do however, she did; and it succeeded to the degree we have mentioned. She placed a light in the window at the extremity of the new apartments, and passed often before it to give intimation of the change; though she could hardly believe that Pietro would undertake any thing so bold and so arduous, as he really effected. When all had succeeded to her wish as far as Livia was concerned, she trembled lest her

treachery should be discovered, and her terrors were increased by the news of Pietro's death. When she arrived at Saracinesco she resolved to avail herself of the circumstance, and to risk every thing to escape from the danger in which she was involved.

Andrea summoned her into his presence ; and this embarrassed her greatly : for she knew not how far he might be acquainted with the means used by Antonio in his clandestine negotiations ; or how far Pietro and his grandfather acted in concert.

She bowed respectfully as she entered ; and, appearing frightened, Andrea in a grave and melancholy tone assured her of his protection, and expressed great affliction for the death of his grandson, but at the same time some disapprobation of his conduct. He said that nothing but the excessive and almost hopeless passion which he nourished for his promised bride could excuse the step which he had taken, and he enquired of Giovanna whether she had any previous suspicion of his intentions, and to what place he had meant to transport her Lady.

There is nothing perhaps which more forcibly stamps the value of truth, honour, and justice, than the pains taken by two deceivers to conceal from each other their treachery ; or at least to discover when it may be safe to drop the mask. Andrea knew that Giovanna had been secured to

the interests of his house ; and she had reason to believe that Pietro had not acted entirely without the connivance of his grandfather ; at least she knew that he had at one time employed Antonio ; but she was uncertain as to his information respecting late events ; and she thought it most prudent, as well as most becoming, to assume an air of innocence and of excessive attachment to her Lady ; attributing her flight from the villa to the anxious desire of discovering Livia's retreat, even were she to risk her life in the pursuit.

She had expected to find Antonio in Manero's castle ; but she was fearful of enquiring for him ; and the aged Baron was not less anxious than herself to learn tidings of this confidential agent, who possessed artifice and boldness worthy of his employers. Andrea began to think that he had shared the fate of his master, and knew not what course to steer while he remained in that uncertainty. Revenge was the passion predominant with him at this moment ; but he was too crafty to manifest his feelings ; and, with seeming compassion for the well dissembled affliction of Giovanna, he dismissed her, ordering that she might be well treated. At the same time he secretly commanded that she should be strictly watched, and not suffered to depart.

The messenger was now introduced, and once more repeated what Octavio had charged him to say. Manero was cautious in his answers ; but

declared on the faith of a knight, that he knew not whither the flight of Livia was directed, adding that he could scarcely believe that his unfortunate grandson carried off the Lady against her inclination; but that he was as anxious as Octavio could be to investigate the matter, and find out the truth; that in the mean time, although he considered himself as the person most aggrieved, he was willing to consent to an armistice, and that the Lord of Ampiglione well knew he was an impartial man, and that his intentions towards him had always been friendly.

The messenger replied that he was not authorised to propose or accept an armistice; that he had exactly told the wishes and the commands of Orsini, and that the chief object of his mission was to re-demand the Lady, who had evidently been taken away by force.

Manero would make no reply; and no further satisfaction could be gained by the messenger; for still the mind of Manero was intent on vengeance, and all that he wished was to lull his enemy into delusive security.

The messenger and his companions were obliged to return to Ampiglione, and Andrea learned from his people that notwithstanding the repulse of the invading bands, that city was left in a state of great confusion, that the walls had been thrown down in many places, and that Octavio had lost a considerable number of his best

troops. Massimo was indeed wounded, and under the necessity of retiring to San Vito ; but he had a corps de reserve ready for action, and under the orders of an able officer. The people of Saracinesco were incensed at their defeat, and thirsting to revenge the death of Pietro ; fresh troops arrived from Sambuci, and nothing seemed wanting but a chief to head them.

Andrea went to Mario, whom he found so totally absorbed by his affliction, that it was long before he could in any way rouse him from what he called his apathy. Prayers, reproaches, and arguments were long employed in vain ; and when compelled to listen, it was with feelings far different from those which Andrea would have excited. His brother's death had made on Mario an impression not easy to efface, but an impression of a nature totally opposite to that which the vindictive Baron would have liked to witness. Instead of adopting the revengeful feelings suggested to him by his grandfather, his heart was softened ; and, while he mourned the untimely fate of one so dear to him, he could not ward the reflections, which forced themselves on his mind, and presented to him in the strongest colours the injustice of that warfare which has for its basis the spirit of rapacity or of vengeance. The fatal consequences of such a spirit were fresh in his thoughts ; and his love for Seraphina was not the less strong for being nearly hopeless. He could not support

the idea of heaping fresh injuries on her father and her family. Should he not be inexcusable if he attempted it? Far more so than Pietro, who was disappointed and rejected. Of what had he to complain? Was he not accepted, contracted to her whom he idolized?

Andrea observed these sentiments powerfully combating the bent which he wanted him to take. He had never manifested for Mario the same affection as for Pietro, and he had no hold of him on the score of gratitude or kindness. To his obedience something might be enjoined; but neither of the young men had been accustomed to consult the wishes of Andrea when they could find opportunities of acting independently.

Mario was, however, as Andrea knew, of a character more easy to govern than that of his brother; and now his influence was no more, it might be brought under the rule of a more experienced counsellor; but, in the present instance, advice and coercion could be of little avail; for they could not inspire that animation which was an essential point to be secured for an enterprize of this nature. The wily Manero considered all this, and soon resolved on the arguments that he would use.

“As to myself,” he said “I were well content, Mario, to spend the sad remnant of my days in peace and oblivion: but the shade of thy brother calls for revenge, and thou art deaf to its

voice. Yes: I have lost him who was the pride and support of my house. His daring courage was a flame which communicated itself to all around him: but that is extinct:—a cold and lifeless indifference pervades my castle; I will not say my vassals, for I should wrong their noble and affectionate natures. They loved their leader; they have hearts to revenge my wrongs, and to honour his memory: not sitting down to weep over his remains; for he would have disdained such tribute; but, like the generous courser starting for the goal, impatient to turn our sorrows on the heads of our enemies. Alas! they have now no leader; and soon, too soon for the happiness of this country, the favorite of Orsini, the gay adventurer, who disguises, under the specious semblance of urbanity, his insolent contempt of us and of our manner, will return and trample on our prostrate necks. Yes: he will return, and choose the sister whom he most approves and values. We know his choice; and he may condescend to grace our humbler fortunes with her whom he rejects. Orsini will grant him all he asks, and he will lord it over us as his master, the cruel Charles of Anjou, lords it over his devoted kingdoms.”

Here Mario, stung to the quick, interrupted him, and exclaimed, “No. This cannot, must not be: I will not suffer it;” but, recollecting himself, he said, “If it be Lusignan you mean,

he is far away, gone to seek some monk, his uncle in Provence, hopeless of success with either of the sisters. One, who knows all this well, the Lady Julia, told me."

"It was a pretence, a poor pretence," said Andrea. "A messenger was sent to fetch him back, and, unless opposed to speed, he will be all powerful. His name of Fortebraccio, his famed achievements, his ultramontane talents, and his courtly manners, have, doubtless, won the hearts of Orsini's daughters. One is, perhaps, more open; the other may dissemble: or, I may wrong her, she may prefer a countryman; but she may be forced to yield her promised hand to the all-conquering stranger."

"My Lord! are you assured of this?" said Mario, rising.

"I doubt it not," answered Manero sadly, "but to me it is of little consequence. In Pietro's grave my hopes, my blasted affections, the honors of my house are buried. I shall soon take my place beside them; and no tears will be shed, no lamentations wasted over them or me."

Mario started, as if re-animated by the fire of Prometheus. He hastened to the troops, already forming themselves into battalions; and, not allowing himself to reflect on the justice or expediency of what he was about to un-

dertake, exhibited every sign of impatient fury. The men received him with shouts of applause, and thought they saw in him a second Pietro.

CHAPTER XIII.

WORDS cannot describe the feelings of Livia, when she found herself in the power of Pietro's servants. Compelled to follow their guidance, nay forcibly hurried, she knew not whither, in the most tremendous night, she at length perceived that they took not the road to Saracinesco; but this could be no comfort to her. On the contrary, her indignation and her terror were increased by the thought that they were conducting her, not to the castle of his grandfather, but to some solitary dwelling, known only to himself and the desperate wretches who obeyed his mandates.

When her cries could no longer be of consequence, her conductors began to treat her with more respect; and abated somewhat of the speed

with which they obliged her to travel; but they gave no answer to her repeated questions as to the place to which they were carrying her. They rested, for a short time, in a cavern at a trifling distance from the road, and they afterwards pursued their journey to San Vito, where they found some difficulty in being admitted. The gates were closed, and all had the appearance of watchful anxiety. Antonio wished to send for his kinsman, but that was not allowed; and he began to fear a discovery, when one of the guard recollected that he had seen him with his master, when he came to concert plans with Massimo. Livia was still muffled up in the cloak which Pietro had thrown over her, and was neither allowed to speak nor to be seen distinctly. The people of San Vito only remarked that a prisoner was brought in, and had no interest in asking further questions, as soon as they were convinced that the party were friends and not enemies: a circumstance which was confirmed by the arrival of Baldo, the man whom Antonio sought, and who had previously received a hint from him on the subject; for this enterprising schemer wished to have all the merit of the success, and thought he could only ensure it by managing all in his own way. His friends appeared to have expected him and his party, said the rooms were in order, and that they should be well lodged until Signor Pietro Manero should want them.

This perfectly satisfied the guards at the gate, and Antonio thanked his accomplice for being on the watch, and saving him further trouble.

As soon as Livia discovered in what place she was, she resolved on demanding to be taken to the palace of Massimo : for she had more confidence in the high-minded enemy of her father, than she could possibly feel in the alternately servile and despotic Antonio. She was not, however, permitted to choose an asylum ; but was taken to an inconsiderable dwelling in the suburbs, where, after some refreshment had been offered to her, which she declined, she was left to throw herself on a couch, and meditate on the sad situation to which she was reduced.

Massimo, in the meanwhile, repulsed from Ampiglione, and suffering great pain, was obliged to halt at a small town on the road, and there wait till his wounds were dressed, and a more easy conveyance than his spirited charger was procured for transporting him to San Vito. A considerable degree of fever, occasioned by the journey and inclemency of the weather, increased his sufferings ; and, when at length he arrived at his castle, he was conveyed to his chamber ; and orders were given that he should be kept as quiet as possible.

Antonio, on the alert for intelligence of his master, soon learned that he was missing, that he had not been seen by his brother, nor by any one

else when the people of San Vito parted from those of Saracinesco. He began to fear the worst; although he thought it still possible that the young baron might be gone to prepare his grandfather for the reception of his prize. He knew not how to act; for he could expect nothing but disapprobation from Mario, and he knew not how far Andrea might be concerned in the plot, or how far he might choose to avow it. His associates became discontented, and urged him to return to Saracinesco, which he kept deferring from hour to hour, in the faint hope that Pietro or his squire might appear.

A messenger from Andrea at length brought the melancholy news, and Antonio learned the particulars of the embassy from Ampiglione; as also that one of the women belonging to Livia, who expected to find her at the castle of Manero, still remained there, after having had a conference with him.

This was enough to convince Antonio of what he before surmised. He told the messenger that he came to San Vito in search of his master, and that he would now hasten home to pay the last duties to his memory. Wrapped in the sable cloak of sorrow, he had reason enough to feel that of which he assumed the semblance; and his thoughts were turned to the interview which he expected to have with Andrea: sometimes he flattered himself that his hopes of advancement,

disappointed by the fall of Pietro, might be realised, if he could ingratiate himself with the aged baron, in whose service he might reap equal advantage, with far less danger. These were his chief reflections on the subject of the recent event ; and as fear or hope predominated, he was dejected or cheerful. So true it is, that the more kindly affections, either of sorrow or joy, can be felt by those alone who pursue the path of rectitude and virtue ; while with others, it is self interest that gives to circumstances their shadow or their light.

Antonio, after giving the strictest charge to Baldo not to let the lady escape, which he enforced by the fear of punishment, in case of discovery, and the hope of reward, from the rich Manero, if the secret were kept, bestowed on him some pieces of gold, as an earnest of greater liberality, and departed.

On his arrival at Saracinesco, he first endeavoured to see Giovanna, and to learn from her what had passed, that he might be prepared to address Manero in a proper tone ; but it was not to be accomplished ; for the strictest orders had been given that none should converse with her, but in the presence of those who were appointed to watch her every word and action. The cautious Antonio, who was immediately aware of this, applied to the chamberlain, and only requested he would inform Andrea of his arrival.

More was not necessary : he was instantly summoned ; and entered, bowing with silent respect, while his countenance expressed the deepest affliction.

Andrea looked at him gravely, and said, “ I know thou wert a faithful servant of my unfortunate grandson ; but what could tempt thee, without his participation, to carry off the heiress of Ampiglione ? He and his brother attacked that city to vindicate our insulted honor ; but thou hast blasted his fame by an action, which, though perhaps arising from thy affection to him, cannot meet our approbation ; at least cannot be sanctioned by us.”

Antonio perfectly understood the meaning of Andrea Manero ; and would have consented to bear all the blame of the enterprise, for the purpose of seconding the baron’s views, if he had not recollected an expedient equally calculated to suit them and his own. When he learned all the particulars known of his master’s death, he heard also of that of his squire. He could, therefore, with the utmost safety, throw the whole affair on the latter ; and, without the slightest hesitation, he replied :

“ My Lord ! our honored leader, your lamented grandson, took a chosen band round by the castle walls, while the greater body of your troops, with those of San Vito, were opposing the enemy near the garden front. He had intelligence

of an ill-defended entrance, which appeared to promise the facility of getting Octavio between us and Massimo. During this attempt, Marco Benducci, his squire, perceived lights at a window, and females passing to and fro. My master knew not that the ladies were in those apartments, and I was close to him. How things were managed I cannot say; but I saw a ladder of ropes at the window, and a lady brought down thence. It was all confusion; and, in the midst of it, I received orders from Marco to take care of the lady, whom he mounted on a palfrey, and to conduct her safely to San Vito. In due subordination, I could not refuse to obey the orders of one so high in my master's household; and, with the three companions assigned me, I arrived at the gate of Massimo's residence, long before his return. There we had great difficulty to gain admittance, as we were not expected; and I knew not how to act. I was fearful, my Lord, of your disapprobation; and, recollecting that I knew a person at San Vito, who has seen better days, and is an honest man, I deposited the lady at his house, and gave instructions that she should be kept perfectly concealed, until I could know your pleasure."

This relation would not have satisfied any one particularly desirous of knowing the truth; but it was perfectly consistent with the wishes of Manero; for it convinced him of the caution and

judgment of the relator, and recommended him more than ever to his favour.

“Thou art a faithful fellow,” said he, “and one so truly attached to my grandson deserves a recompense. Be as true to me as thou hast been to him, and I will dry thy tears, and employ thy talents in my service.”

Antonio threw himself at the Baron’s feet, kissed his hands, and promised to serve him with devoted fidelity. He then ventured to ask permission that he might speak freely with Giovanna ; who, he said, was always attached to the interests of his dear master, and had not ceased to give her lady good advice concerning him.

The word advice offended the susceptible Andrea ; and he noticed it by saying that obedience, and not advice, was expected from domestics ; adding however, that he should reward Giovanna according to her merits, as she was also perhaps the person who conveyed his letters to the Lady Julia.

Antonio answered in the affirmative ; and after a short delay, he was allowed the interview which he desired ; and Manero condescended to give him orders that their conversation should be kept free and unmolested ; but that neither of them should be suffered to depart without his knowledge and permission. The times, he said, were dangerous, and too much caution could not be observed.

In those times political intrigues between persons of the description now before us were generally founded on what is called an affair of the heart. Giovanna had sufficient beauty and vivacity to captivate a follower of Pietro Manero, and they had both looked forward to the celebration of the nuptials of their Lord and Lady as a preliminary to their own, with a lucrative establishment, and all such considerations as could heartily interest them in the concerns of their principals. The gravity and decorum of the household of the sisters, under the vigilant inspection of Vincenza, were by no means suited to the temper of Giovanna. She hated the person whom she considered as the chief cause of the restraint which she endured, and despised the other attendants for tamely submitting to it. She had been countenanced by Julia as a spy on the actions of her ladies, and had on this account been entrusted with the correspondence between her and Manero; but she longed to emancipate herself from what she called slavery, and she felt not a little disappointed that, when her lady was taken away, she should have been forgotten and left behind.

She welcomed Antonio with great delight, and hailed his appearance as an omen of her speedy liberation from the new confinement, on which she had not reckoned.

“Giovanna!” said Antonio, when they were alone, “I have exchanged my young master for

an old one ; but the service, into which I have just now entered, will require more circumspection, and will perhaps be less profitable : at least we cannot help ourselves as we did with Pietro. We must be prudent and useful, above all we must have no scruples. That I see clearly enough. Therefore do not be foolish, and we shall do well enough."

"I do not understand you," said Giovanna, I am willing, you know, to do any thing that is for the good of my lady ; though, with all her sense and spirit, she is sometimes as silly as the Lady Seraphina ; and she has brought all this upon us by refusing Signor Pietro."

"That," replied Antonio, "was not the case with her sister ; for she accepted the other."

"You will not understand me ;" said Giovanna : "I mean having spirit and vivacity, she ought to have liked Signor Pietro, who was handsome, and bold, and generous. Her sister has not a notion of those things."

"Well," replied Antonio, "we will not talk of either of them at present ; but of our own affairs. We need not dissemble with each other. It is all loss of time, Giovanna ! If thy lady will be a mad woman, thou hast no business to follow her steps. We have plunged into the torrent, and we must roll on with it ; and keep our heads above water too, if we can, Giovanna !"

"If you do not speak more clearly," said his hearer, rather peevisly, "how would you have me to understand you ?"

“I can explain nothing as yet,” answered he, “for I know not the old lord’s intentions. I can only guess them; but this I can tell thee; and I would have thee remember it: my interest is thine: and mine is that of my master.”

“So far is good,” returned Giovanna, with assumed gravity; “but I am sure you will not expect me to injure my young ladies, or my Lord Orsini, or any of the family, except indeed Vincenza whom I detest.”

“Who wants to injure them?” exclaimed Antonio in a sharp tone and with some impatience. “You, Giovanna, have nothing to do but to mind what I say, and do as I bid you; in short, think of nothing, except” added he, softening his voice, “except the adornment of that pretty person of thine. Come, cheer up, Giovanna! Thou art here with me; and here thou must remain while it is my lord’s pleasure; and go when and whether it may be his pleasure to send thee.”

Notwithstanding the compliment to Giovanna’s person, she was by no means pleased with the insignificant part allotted to her in this new drama; and she began to perceive, what she might easily have foreseen, that she had thrown herself into the power of those who would use very little ceremony. She felt that sort of repentance which has its source in disappointed vanity; and many civil speeches from Antonio were requisite for restoring her to tolerable good humour.

Octavio Orsini in the meanwhile was busily engaged in preparations for meeting the enemy. The return of his messenger without any satisfactory answer or intelligence of Livia afflicted and irritated him. He still believed her to be concealed somewhere in the territories of Manero, and he conceived that force alone could restore her. The flight of Giovanna added to his suspicions, and he resolved neither to attempt, nor listen to any farther negotiation.

His intention of meeting the enemy in the field was attended with success. He came up with the combined forces of San Vito and Saracinesco on a plain near the banks of the Anio, where many a battle had been fought between the Romans and the neighbouring nations during the early ages of the republic. Here Octavio lost a great number of his people; but victory declared itself in his favour. Mario fought with a courage prompted by despair, and seemed desirous to cast away a life which had become a burden to him. He was deserted by his troops, who all, except the relics of his brother's chosen band, fled precipitately to the hills, and left him to cut his way through the surrounding enemy.

Night closed in as he effected this daring escape, and he took refuge, with a few followers, in a wood, where a half-ruined chapel afforded them an asylum.

It appeared strange to Mario that he should still be alive, and that the instinct of self-preservation should have overcome his despair, and impelled him to this last exertion. His companions rejoiced in his safety and in their own. They listened to the distant sounds of the retiring enemy, which grew fainter and fainter, as Octavio slowly led his victorious, but exhausted bands towards the walls of Ampiglione. At length they were heard no more; but it was uncertain whether sentinels might not be stationed to give the alarm in case the small party of Mario should appear in the open country, for the purpose of cutting off their retreat to Saracinesco or San Vito. The moon had not risen, but the stars shone brightly in an unclouded sky, and it was thought difficult to avoid discovery.

At length it occurred to one of the party to propose to Mario that they should return to the field of battle, and exchange cloaks, helmets, and shields, with some of the slain on the part of Octavio; for this would make them appear as belonging to his army, if they were descried by any of his people on the watch.

Mario was at first unwilling to pursue the scheme, but he acceded to it for the safety of his followers; and they sallied forth, leaving in the chapel their lances and whatever might encumber them.

They soon made the exchange, and returned to their place of refuge with the semblance of soldiers of Orsini, having assumed his colours, and in every respect resembling those whom they had despoiled.

On entering the chapel they perceived three or four men occupied in securing the booty which had been left there. These, as far as could be judged by the faint light, communicated to objects through the half shaded windows, appeared to be stragglers from the troops of Ampiglione. They were so in effect, and had been lurking in the wood to secure and divide the plunder which they had made contrary to the orders of their chief. They intended to deposit part of it in the chapel, where they found fresh booty.

Mario and his people fell on them immediately, and they endeavoured to make their escape; but Mario, who first entered the chapel, had already seized one of them by the collar. The others fled, and his soldiers followed them to a considerable distance.

The man who was detained threw down a spear and shield which he had seized; and, concluding from the mantle and crest of Mario, that he was one of Octavio's officers, he excused himself from the apparent robbery, by saying that he considered it as plunder from the enemy, and therefore as lawful gain, which he meant to carry to the general mass.

Mario, unwilling to betray himself, told him that however belonging to the enemy, it was evident that the lances and shields were placed there for safety, and that he had no right to remove them. The man remonstrated, and showing his scarf, which was more splendid than the rest of his habiliments seemed to warrant, he said,—

“Look at this. It belonged to the bold Pietro Manero. I gave him his death-blow, and I deserve reward rather than punishment.”

Mario was struck with horror and indignation. On the scarf he saw stains of his brother's blood. He drew his poinard, and was about to plunge it into the bosom of the man, whom he still held, and who, being unarmed, fell on his knees and begged his life with earnest entreaties, while he grasped the uplifted hand of Mario.

At this instant the moon, just risen, gleamed suddenly on the altar; and the imagination of Mario, heated almost to frenzy, pictured to him the light as supernatural. The suppliant cried aloud,—“Behold that sacred image! O behold! It warns thee to be merciful. Forgive as thou wouldst be forgiven!”

“Mario gazed; and in the agitation of his mind, he thought he saw its brow contract, and the lips move:—“Forgive as thou wouldst be forgiven!” re-echoed, as he believed, from the animated stone. He dashed the poinard to the

ground ; and, extricating himself from the hand that held him, he loosened his hold of the intended victim, and exclaimed in an agony of passion,—“I forgive thee, but remove that horrid sight.—Depart.”

The man was gone before these words were finished, and the whole appeared to Mario as a fearful dream. He threw himself at the foot of the altar, where his bursting heart was relieved by a torrent of tears. He then prayed fervently. The scarf had brought with it direful recollections, and his conscience smote him more forcibly than ever for his participation in the follies and violence of the unhappy Pietro's short career. Casting his eyes upwards, he exclaimed,—“I have forgiven. Do thou, all gracious and merciful Power, forgive me. Render me worthy of thy service, and accept the solemn vow which I here offer up to devote the sad remainder of my life to that, and that alone.”

Scarcely had he pronounced this vow, when his companions returned, bringing with them the spoils which they had succeeded in wresting from the robbers. Mario received them with newly acquired calmness, and rode with them in silence to Saracinesco, meditating on what plan he should pursue for the performance of his vow.

His companions related the manner in which they had pursued and came up with their enemies ; the death of one, the wounds of another,

and the impossibility of his going far. Mario heard them with disgust. His soul was sick of blood, and his imagination dwelt on the recent event which had made so deep an impression on all his faculties.

CHAPTER XIV.

WE must now return to the unfortunate Livia, who considered herself as the most wretched of human beings; and it is needless to say that the restraint and the alarming uncertainty of her situation might have justified that feeling in one less impatient and irritable than herself.

Antonio had never appeared; and she could make no impression on the persons with whom he had lodged her. She had no means of escape, and she saw no one except the woman of the house, who brought the scanty meal, and the lamps supplied with oil, sufficient only for a small portion of the night. The remainder she passed in terror not to be described, expecting every moment that the door, which was locked without, would open and admit Pietro Manero.

On the third morning, in answer to her usual question of "What accounts from Ampiglione?" to which she had as yet received no answer, she was told that Signor Antonio had gone to enquire.

Relieved by this information to a degree hardly to be believed but by those who, having been long doomed to hopeless misery, perceive a faint glimmering of better prospects, she renewed an offer of money which she had before made more than once, but which had constantly been rejected. After some hesitation it was now accepted, and she obtained some intelligence. The woman said enough to convince her that the general attempt on Ampiglione had been foiled, and that Pietro was either killed or dangerously wounded. She also learned that Massimo was in his castle, and she reverted to her first thought of placing herself under his protection. She knew, as we have said, that he was prejudiced against her father; but the cause of that prejudice was also known to her, and she justly conjectured that, although haughty, violent, and vindictive, he was a man incapable of descending to treachery himself, or of sanctioning it in others.

Having formed her resolution, she dried her eyes, threw back her hair, which was hanging negligently over her face, and adjusted it in decent order, wrapping her mantle round her, and covering her head with her veil. She told the

woman that she had not only the means but the inclination to render her and her husband rich and happy, and desired that she would bring him to speak with her immediately.

Baldo had in his youth been wild and dissipated. He had squandered his patrimony, and now subsisted on a very small employment, to the profits of which he perhaps added by means not the most just or lawful. He had sons who resembled what he had been, and he lived miserably, fearful of others, and dissatisfied with himself.

“Baldo,” said his wife, who perceived that he was more thoughtful than usual, “I am not surprised that you are uneasy. What shall we do with this lady now that Signor Pietro is killed?—Who is to pay for her maintenance?”

“That is no business of thine,” said her husband gruffly. “Let me alone; I must not be interrupted in my thoughts.”

“I only meant,” answered the wife, “to tell you what I have done; and I am sure you cannot blame me. The lady has been bountiful to me for the little I have told her, and she now wants to speak with you. She seems to be very generous; and, in the present state of things, we may gain more from her than from Antonio.”

“Thou art a fool as usual,” replied Baldo; “we may gain little from Antonio, as matters stand; but we may have much to fear from him.

He may come back at any time, and thou hast probably told her enough to raise his fury against us. He has been in a good school, a follower of Signor Pietro alive or dead is not to be trifled with."

"I have told her no more than what she might hear from the people under the windows," answered the wife. "Every one is talking of the death of Sir Pietro, and the flight of Manero's people. They say that ours of San Vito retired in good order; but that the Saracinesco and Sambuci men ran away like sheep."

"So they may say, as the others are not here to contradict them," returned Baldo. "Didst thou ever know allies who did not hate each other worse than the enemy, and more especially if they happen to be neighbours? or who did not take all the praise to themselves, and cast the blame on the others?"

"I understand none of these things, Baldo," said the woman; "and so I would have you go and talk to the Lady yourself. You know better than I do what is to be told, and what is to be denied."

"I believe so indeed," said Baldo sneeringly; "but she may ask me questions that may be equally dangerous to answer, and to decline answering. I hate to have to talk to a Lady; for of course, there is no reasoning with her; and I know of no way to make her hold her tongue. I

dare not threaten her ; for Antonio said we must keep her close, but treat her well."

"Surely, Baldo," answered his wife, "you would not be so cruel as to frighten the Lady. She seems a little proud to be sure ; but I do not think she is artful or ill natured."

"Ye are all artful enough," muttered Baldo, who however, after a little more grumbling, consented to follow his wife into Livia's chamber.

She was seated at a window ; and her appearance was so composed and dignified that Baldo felt an awe for which he could not account. As they entered, she gently inclined her head, and said to the woman. "Is this your husband?"

Being answered in the affirmative, she bent her penetrating eyes on Baldo, whose countenance was not one of those described as letters of recommendation. Her situation, however, was such as not to allow her to be too nice in her choice of confidants, and she had recourse to the only argument which she thought could be effectual with the person before her.

"My friend," she said, "do you observe this gold chain? It is worth much. Obtain me an interview with Alessandro Massimo, guarded how you will, and the chain is yours."

"Lady," answered Baldo, "we are honest in this house. Otherwise this chain and all you have about you might already have been ours."

“I suspect no one of being dishonest,” said Livia, “but in the present instance you could not be so without discovery. Antonio will return : and the designs of the Manero family are not on such trifles as these.”

While she thus spoke she threw the chain half disdainfully over her finger. The woman looked at it with eyes of admiration, and Baldo certainly not with those of indifference.

“I can feel for a Lady in distress,” said Baldo, softening his features as well as he could. “I can feel for a Lady, but I know as well as you do that Antonio will return ; and I shall run great risks from him, as well as from my Lord, if your situation be known.”

“Trust to me,” replied Livia. “I will explain your conduct to the Lord of San Vito in such a manner as shall convince him that you have acted the part of a faithful vassal ; and, as to Antonio, and the men of Saracinesco, if you have your Lord’s protection, what can you fear from them?”

“Who are you, Lady, who speak such high words?” asked her host, looking more attentively at her than before.

“Of that I will inform no one but Alessandro Massimo,” said Livia decidedly.

“But,” continued the cautious Baldo, “you may tell my Lord any story you please ; and how can he know whether you speak the truth?”

Livia was not accustomed to be thus interrogated; but she subdued her indignant feelings, and recollecting the father of Vincenza, who was an old servant of Massimo, she said, "I am known by one about your Lord, who will bear testimony to the truth of what I say."

These last words made a considerable impression on her hearers; but still Baldo resisted and said,

"At all events you are from Ampiglione; and my Lord hates the Orsinis mortally, and all belonging to them."

"Be that as it may," answered the Lady, "let him hate me, and imprison me if he will. I prefer being in his power to remaining in that of the Manero. As to your interest, his love or hatred of me is indifferent. Give me up to him either as a prisoner or a hostage. I care not which."

Baldo began to conceive a better opinion of Livia's understanding than he had shown of that of his wife. He took a few minutes more to reflect, and one more difficulty was all he started."

"Alessandro Massimo," he said, "is confined by wounds to his chamber: and I question whether he will admit you."

"Make that your plea," replied Livia, "for not having sooner applied for an audience, as it was your duty to do."

“This young stranger,” said Baldo to his wife, “appears to understand the character and temper of our master better than we ourselves. I believe she is right, and I will go to the castle.” He then left the room to the great joy of his wife, who already thought herself in possession of the gold chain, and cast her eyes thence on bracelets and other ornaments equally valuable.

“Ah! Lady,” she said, “when I married, I had chains, and rings, and other jewels; not indeed so fine as yours, but fairer than any of my neighbours. Alas! men never mind how they plunder their poor wives and mothers. If you knew all I have suffered, you would pity me.”

Livia stopped her by advising her to be cautious of what she said, as, if she indulged herself in such conversations with strangers, her husband might one day hear that she complained of him.

The topic was instantly dropped, and the woman remained silenced, busying herself with her distaff, until Livia asked her some questions relative to San Vito and Massimo.

“I have been told,” answered the woman, “that a braver or more valiant noble knight than our master was never known; nor a more courteous one, they say; before his only daughter’s marriage and death soured his temper, and made him quite a different man from what he had been. He even took a dislike to his fine estates

in this country. He has lived chiefly at Rome, where he has a great palace, and servants out of number ; but what of that ? It does not make him happy ; and here is his Lady who is very good and very devout ; but she will take no comfort ; nor ever has since the loss of her daughter ; and she does not like to go to Rome ; and my Lord, when he does come to San Vito, finds the castle dull : and he is always angry or anxious about something of great affairs ; for when things go wrong he is vexed, and when they go right he is scarcely pleased ; and he takes no delight in hawking or in hunting the wild boar, or in his fine woods and gardens, or in any thing that I can see, except sending messengers backwards and forwards, and keeping a dozen secretaries ; yet writing as much himself as if he kept none."

Baldo returned in time to stop the farther progress of his wife's narration, and with a countenance far more cheerful than he had hitherto exhibited. He said that he had with difficulty obtained an audience ; but that when admitted and allowed to tell his tale, he was at first reprimanded by Alessandro, for not informing him sooner of the circumstance ; in which Baldo had pleaded the fear of disturbing him. He was then told that he must inform the Lady it was his fault that she was kept so long under his unworthy roof, and that two attendants of the Lady Beatrice would

be sent to fetch her to the castle ; and that, if Antonio returned, he was to be immediately dispatched to the same place.

Baldo and his wife now vied with each other in humble and obsequious attentions, which Livia received with as much indifference as if she had observed no change in their behaviour. She no sooner saw the damsels arrive than she took off the chain, which she put into the hands of Baldo, and gave to his wife a broach of considerable value.

CHAPTER XV.

LIVIA was respectfully conducted to Massimo's palace by the attendants of his lady, followed by servants in rich liveries, escorted by guards still more splendid in their dress. Numerous domestics were ranged in order, according to their different classes and gradations of rank, in the halls through which she passed; and, at the door of Alessandro's chamber, she was met by his wife, the Lady Beatrice, in a mourning habit, with a veil resembling those worn by nuns, and a crucifix, with beads depending from her girdle. Her veil was thrown back, and showed a face still regularly beautiful, but pale and emaciated. Her voice was gentle and tremulous, and her

deportment mild and melancholy, as she welcomed Livia with "Deo gratias," and pressed kindly her hand.

She led her to Massimo, who was seated near a table covered with writings. He rose with pain to receive her, and desired that she would place herself on a seat opposite to him.

Alessandro Massimo appeared to be a man about sixty years of age, lofty in stature, and of commanding aspect. He had a fine countenance, which would have been pleasing, had it not borne the marks of severity and reserve. His hair was only intermixed with grey; and, notwithstanding the stiffness occasioned by his wounds, there was in his figure and manner a graceful dignity, that struck the beholder with admiration.

Livia's feelings were in unison with his appearance; and yet she scarcely knew how to begin the conversation, for she was not accustomed to be a suppliant; but she was soon relieved from her anxiety by Massimo himself.

"I hope, lady," he said, "that I understand correctly the person to whose dwelling you were taken by persons of Saracinesco. You wished for this interview, did you not?"

"Most certainly," answered Livia, "I was anxious to claim your protection, being assured that the indignity which I have experienced could not have your sanction. Why I was brought hither, and left here by servants of Ma-

nero, I know not : but by so acting, I must think they have insulted you, my Lord, as much as they have the house of Orsini."

"I have sworn eternal enmity to the house of Orsini," exclaimed Alessandro, with a look of fury, while his pale consort crossed herself with trembling haste, and then fixed her downcast eyes on the ground.

"That, however," continued he, in a tone of suppressed indignation, "cannot prevent me from vindicating my own honor, or from observing the respect due to your sex, and apparent worth. Who are you?"

"The eldest daughter of Octavio Orsini."

These words were pronounced in a manner that left no doubt on the mind of Massimo as to the identity of the person who uttered them. He saw before him the Livia Orsini, of whose haughty refusal when the contract was tendered to her, he had heard the particulars.

Neither the disposition of Massimo, nor the chivalrous manners of the times, permitted him to reproach her with this refusal : but his glance was that of censure : and he said,

"Your faithless father promised you to Pietro Manero. The engagement was broken ; and revenge was due ; but not such revenge as was inconsiderately taken. My quarrel is not that of Manero ; and I will afford you the protection you have asked."

There was a mixture of courtesy and pride in the language of Massimo, that made a singular impression on the congenial mind of Livia. She could not suffer the epithet, which he had annexed to her father's name, to pass unnoticed: for the more she felt the proud generosity of his proceeding, the less she could endure his unjust accusation of Octavio.

“My Lord,” she said, rising from her seat, “I thank you for the honourable treatment which I have received at your hands. I expected no less, from the character you bear; but Octavio Orsini is neither faithless nor unjust. Too indulgent, perhaps, towards her who now speaks to you; she is the sole cause of that engagement being broken; and Octavio is as blameless as he is noble.”

As she was yet speaking, a messenger arrived from Saracinesco, bearing a letter from Massimo from Andrea Manero. Beatrice read the wish of the former in his look; and, kindly addressing Livia, offered to conduct her to her own apartments.

There she offered every consolation in her power, and Livia, whose mind had long been in a state of excitement and perturbation, was subdued by the gentle sympathy of Beatrice, and she burst into a flood of tears; striving, in vain, to express her gratitude.

“It were strange, indeed,” said the lady, “if I were not to feel for the unhappy: I who have had so much affliction!”

“The same affliction,” replied Livia, “has fallen on the Lord of San Vito; but it has not produced a similar effect.”

A faint blush arose on the cheek of Beatrice: she adored her husband; and, though her milder nature could not justify his haughty resentment, she was pained at hearing him censured.

“The feelings of a warrior,” she said, “and those of a helpless mother, must, naturally, be very different, though suffering under the same calamity. Their paths, alas! how different in this wretched state of existence! May they be more alike in another!”

As she spoke, her humid eyes were raised to heaven; and she repeated inwardly a short prayer before she resumed the conversation. Livia upbraided herself with having excited feelings so acute in one who was so kind and benevolent. She looked on the ground and remained silent.

One of the women, who attended on Beatrice, entered, and whispered something in her ear.

She arose immediately, and, telling her guest that she would speedily return, she left the room. Livia looked round the apartment, which was furnished with the utmost simplicity, and resembled more the cell of a nun than the chamber of

a Colonna, wedded to a Massimo. She opened a door, which led to a terrace, whence she could enjoy the view of the surrounding country. At the farther extremity of the terrace was another door, which conducted her to a splendid suite of rooms, the apartments of Beatrice in happier days, which she had not inhabited since the loss of her daughter. They were decorated with taste and richness, and sumptuously furnished. Livia, with a curiosity excited by a restless feeling, had examined two or three of the rooms, when she was startled by hearing some one move in an adjoining closet: she turned towards the place whence the sound proceeded, and the doors, according to the custom of Italy, being all left open, she saw, to her confusion, a young man start from the side of a table, at which he was writing, and advance to meet her.

“Have you any commands for me, Lady?” said he, with an air of mingled surprize and pleasure.

“I am a stranger, and have inadvertantly intruded,” answered Livia, with that graceful dignity, which she so easily re-assumed after a moment’s embarrassment.

“A happy intrusion for me,” said the knight; you are probably seeking my Aunt; and, if so, I will conduct you to her chamber. These, indeed, are her rooms, but she never inhabits them; and she permits me to consider them as mine, when I come to San Vito.”

Livia was now really embarrassed. She felt

that she had done wrong, and that the restraining arm of Seraphina had been wanting. She hastened to find her way back to the terrace, and, in her confusion, missed it, to the great delight of her companion; for he could hardly be called her guide, as he made no effort to set her right. She found herself in a magnificent bed-chamber, where servants were busily employed in packing arms, habits, and various other things belonging to their master. She turned back with a look of impatient displeasure; at which the knight laughed, and at length assisted her in finding her way to the terrace.

Beatrice was there, and appeared to be just returned. "Dearest Aunt," said the Knight, "your fair guest, for such I suppose this Lady to be, has honoured me much by mistaking my apartment for yours; but the mistake, alas! ended there. I am not good enough to be mistaken for you." He then took leave; and Livia apologized for what she had done in the confusion of her thoughts, explaining how she had been tempted to wander through the apartment.

Beatrice, whose timid and retired character naturally led her to be surprised that any one oppressed by affliction, and amongst strangers, should like to wander about from curiosity, received the apology without a comment, and only said that she thought her nephew had returned to Palestrina, as he had already taken leave of

her and of her Lord, whom he had come to visit on account of his wound. "I trust," added she, that he said nothing to offend you."

"The only offence of which I can complain," answered Livia, "is that he seemed to enjoy my confusion, and was not willing to aid me in my way back to you."

A faint smile, which these words excited on the lips of Beatrice, soon died away, and was followed by a deep sigh. "Sciarra Colonna," she said, "has yet known no misery. He is wild and thoughtless; but he loves my Lord and me: he knows not who you are. Does he?"

"I cannot say," replied Livia, "our interview was too short for me to guess."

"It is well," resumed Beatrice, and then continued, with some hesitation. "I have to communicate to you what I fear will give you pain. These are sad times, and the love of peace dwells not among us. A second battle is likely to take place between the forces of Manero and those of your father. It may be this very day; for such was the intelligence which my Lord received, as we left the room; and he is of opinion that, for your own sake, you should remain with us till the result be known."

This information threw the unhappy Livia into a state of the deepest anxiety; and she earnestly entreated that she might have permission to depart, let the dangers of the journey be what they might.

“Alas!” said Beatrice, “these are dangerous times for the young and unexperienced. It is on your own account that your departure is deferred. Discord is abroad, and we must await the event with resignation.”

Resignation was a word which Livia had often heard; but to which she had never experimentally applied a meaning. However, she thought in her own mind, and, perhaps, not entirely without reason, that Beatrice appeared to understand it as little as herself. “I hear no murmurs from her lips,” thought she, “but I read repining in that pallid countenance: she submits to her fate; but she does not resign her will. Could I learn to do that, like dearest Seraphina, methinks it would be more consonant to the meaning of those who enjoin the duty.”

A thought of Fortebraccio came across her mind at that moment, and did not contribute to further the half-formed project of conquering her will. It seemed to her as if she perceived some resemblance between him and Sciarra Colonna. The latter appeared to be a few years older than Lusignan, but was certainly not unlike him in stature, or, perhaps, in features; yet there was a marked difference in the expression of the two countenances. Both were open and animated, but that of Lusignan was radiant with benignity when he was cheerful; and, when sad, composed and dignified: while that of Sciarra, as far as

she had observed, was at once haughty and free, assuming command without inspiring attachment.

Absorbed by these reflections, she scarcely heard the mild entreaties of Beatrice, who begged her to be comforted, and assured her that she should be lodged in her apartments, and perfectly undisturbed. She added, that her nephew was gone, or going, and that all things should be made ready for her reception in a very short time.

She then invited her into the chapel, where she herself knelt down before a lamp, placed in a small niche, which was at that season hung with garlands of evergreen, as it was in the spring and autumn with the freshest flowers. Here she offered up her frequent and fervent devotions for the soul of her lost Camilla, and internally for that of the unfortunate youth who perished with her; a circumstance which, at their return to her chamber, she communicated to her guest, requesting also that she would sometimes join in the prayer. "He was your father's friend," she said "and I love, for his sake, the house of Orsini." Then, correcting herself, as if she had been censuring her Lord, she added, "he was wrong, very wrong, no doubt; for he had not her father's consent; but can I blame him for loving my Camilla? She was most lovely. The noble Octavio thought her lovely; but he preferred his kinsman's interest to his own. Else we had all been happy."

Here she wept bitterly; and Livia asked, "Does her father ever mention her?"

"Oh! never," answered Beatrice, "he has not the heart to name her; for he loved her too well. No. Never was a heart formed for love like that of Massimo."

Livia was surprised at hearing this. She had not thus pictured to herself the character of the haughty ambitious Lord of San Vito.

"He has," continued Beatrice, "been unfortunate in his affections. He doted on his daughter, and she left him for a stranger. He doted on his unhappy wife," here the tears almost choked her voice, "and she preferred grief to him."

"If you are conscious of this, dearest Lady," said Livia much affected, "why not exert yourself to make him happy?"

"It is now too late," replied Beatrice, mournfully, "grief has intervovent itself with my nature; and we cannot part. Sometimes indeed I reproach myself, as I did just now, for not endeavouring to be gay and happy, or at least to appear so; but I have lost all."

The natural penetration of Livia taught her to discover the melancholy truth. Beatrice was educated in the strictest seclusion, according to the severest maxims of a house, relative to which it was said in those times, as that of Lucus in more modern ages, that it was truly noble; for that all the sons were valiant and all the daughters vir-

tuous. At fifteen she was married to Alessandro Massimo, a man of active mind, enlarged views, and decisive temper. She had beauty beyond the common lot of mortals, and Massimo's love for her was as ardent as his love of glory ; but so different were their characters that, while she loved and admired, she also feared him, and she rather thought of obeying his commands than of adopting his ideas. When she became the mother of Camilla, all her affections seemed to be centred in her ; and she indulged her with an excess of fondness that undoubtedly rendered her less susceptible of restraint than might otherwise have been the case.

Deprived of her daughter's society, Beatrice had no resource but in the practices of devotion, perhaps too minute and formal, but at the same time untinged with any base alloy ; for she was truly pious, and good, and charitable ; as a wife, she was dutiful and affectionate. She would have reproached herself, had she been capable of comparing any other man with her lord, even in idea. When sickness or wounds confined him to his couch, she watched over him with unremitting zeal ; but she had no power of soothing his sorrow, or of calming his agitated mind by amusing his thoughts, by sharing his counsels, or by taking part in his affairs. He still loved her, and her presence was grateful to him, though her conversation had in it no other interest than that of being

hers. He knew that her chief care was his safety ; that she took no pleasure in the distinctions which he acquired, and that when she accompanied him to Rome, she only thought herself in a splendid prison, and sighed for the quiet and retirement of San Vito.

Unfortunately they had no son ; and Massimo had cause of complaint against his nearest relations. The nephew of Beatrice, Sciarra Colonna, Prince of Palestrina, had the talents and qualities of a hero. He was now, at the age of twenty-eight, considered as one of the greatest generals of the country ; but his character was that of a man who yields rather to the impulse of passion than to the dictates of reason. He took the warmest part in the dissensions of Italy, and Massimo himself, however violent, could not always approve his impetuosity, though he loved, admired, and confided in him.

The decided opposition of Sciarra to the will of the reigning Pontiff was a great affliction to the pious Beatrice, who could not comprehend the nice distinction made by her lord between the obedience which he professed to the ecclesiastical power of the Pope, and the resistance which he also opposed to his mandates as a temporal prince. When they talked of having one of their own party for his successor, she looked forward with satisfaction to the time when she might no longer fear their house being laid under an inter-

dict, and might hope to hear the two beings most dear to her speak with due respect to their spiritual father.

Sciarra Colonna admired beauty whenever it crossed his path. While very young he had espoused, by his father's desire, a lady of the house of Conti, Lords of Tusculum : she died leaving him a son, and he had made no second choice. His military expeditions, his political disputes, and the desultory life which he led, rendered him inimical to domestic restraint, and unconscious of domestic enjoyments. He respected Beatrice as a member of the Colonna family, and revered her for her virtues. He considered her as the model of what a woman ought to be ; and more especially the wife of a man engaged in great affairs. As to general morality, his notions had some latitude ; but, where his own family was concerned, they were those of the strictest honour. He sometimes wondered that Massimo should appear disappointed that Beatrice would not join in the cares and amusements of the world ; for he thought that, if any husband were to be envied, his uncle was that one ; and, if he ever regretted his wife having died in early youth, it was when he thought that he might perhaps have formed her to become a second Beatrice.

In the petty quarrels of neighbouring Barons he felt little interest, though sometimes engaged in them from party spirit, or to speak more justly from party views. He was grieved that the re-

sentment of Massimo should have led him to contract a league with the Maneri. He liked not the crafty policy of Andrea. On Pietro he had always looked with displeasure, and on Mario with perfect indifference.

Of all the younger knights in Latium and Sabina, Lusignan was the only one with whom he had wished to form an intimacy; for he had observed and admired his conduct and his intrepidity in the war of Naples, though attached himself to the party of the unfortunate Conradine.

As he was descending the hill from San Vito with his squire and attendants, he was informed of the messenger from Saracinesco, and of the probability of another combat. He augured ill of the success, and was sorry that any of Massimo's troops should be engaged in it; having flattered himself that a long conversation which he had recently held with him would have prevented a consolidation of his alliance with Manero.

He now began to fear that, as he felt himself bound in honor to support his Uncle's cause, he might be involved in dissensions which would interfere with greater views. He learned with surprise that Lusignan had left the country, and he gave credit to Octavio Orsini for great military talents in having made so noble a defence without his assistance.

Sciarra was but just arrived from Tuscany where he had been to defeat the purposes of Charles of Anjou; and he was yet to learn many

of the circumstances which had occurred during his absence.

In the midst of these important cares, he could not drive from his thoughts the adventure which had occurred to him in the apartment of Beatrice ; and in vain he enquired who the lady might be. The attendants had indeed heard that a distressed lady had applied for protection to Alessandro ; but they supposed her to be the wife of some Baron in the vicinity who had suffered from the arms of Orsini. Were this the case, Sciarra thought, it would be a much better motive for a quarrel than the rejection of Pietro, or the assault of the robbers.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARIO, on his return to Saracinesco, found his grandfather ill-disposed towards him: far from being rejoiced to see him restored in safety to his desolate mansion, he received him with gloomy discontent, visited on him his disappointment at the ill-success of the enterprize, and said all that mortified pride could suggest. He went so far as to accuse him of a deficiency in spirit as well as conduct, and Mario repelled the first of these charges with firmness. He appealed to those who had witnessed his behaviour throughout the day; and their report so completely refuted the accusation, that Andrea was obliged to own that the valour of Mario was not inferior to that of his brother. As to conduct, the witnesses declared that the flight of the troops rendered it impossi-

ble for Mario to rally them, and they spoke with admiration of the bravery with which he had cut his way through the enemy to the chapel in the wood. Massimo's men, they said, retired in better order ; but with considerable loss.

When Andrea appeared to be in some degree pacified, Mario used every argument in his power to induce him to enter into fresh negotiations for peace. He represented the expediency of such a measure, and the likelihood of effecting it on terms by no means disadvantageous from the placability of Orsini's temper. Andrea had too much penetration not to see the benefits which might accrue from a renewal of amity with the Lord of Ampiglione, but forgiveness was not in his nature ; and, while he was listening to the pacific proposals of his grandson, he was thinking how he might gratify at once his wish of revenge, and that of increase of wealth and territory.

We have already remarked that they who are mysterious in all their proceedings must of course often defeat their own purposes. The uncertainty of Antonio, as to the share which Andrea had in the schemes of Pietro, paralyzed his power of serving him, and by obliging him to leave San Vito, to the end that he might study his Lord's intentions, had thrown their important prize into the hands of Massimo, who was not likely to give her up to any one but her father.

Of this intelligence soon arrived at Saracinesco ; Antonio was furious against Baldo, and Andrea no less enraged at Antonio ; but mutual reproaches could be of no avail. Manero revolved all this in the labyrinth of his plotting mind, and at length persuaded himself that he had discovered the means of setting things right with Octavio, whom he found it necessary to appease.

He sent for Antonio and Giovanna, and communicated to them his wishes in the following manner :—

“ I cannot blame you,” said he, addressing himself to the latter, “ for your faithful attachment to your Lady. She is worthy of it ; and however I may lament the early fate of my grandson, I cannot conceal from myself the melancholy truth that his many great qualities were mingled with some violence of temper and irregularity of conduct, which might alarm a young lady of her discernment. Her fears might render her insensible to his superior merit, and to those fears we chiefly must attribute the sad catastrophe, which I am left to mourn : but I must not forget my duty to my family and to my vassals. In their prosperity I will seek for consolation, till these white hairs shall descend peacefully to the grave. Revenge shall be forgotten. Octavio wished for an alliance with my family, and Mario is worthy of the hand that was

withdrawn from his brother. He is of a nature mild and conciliating; and the Lady Livia, after an adventure, which will be canvassed, and may be misrepresented, will be too wise to reject him. Thus, if Octavio prefer not war to peace, he will see the honour of his house restored, harmony re-established in the country, and his losses repaired. I alone shall be the sufferer. You find I speak to you with sincerity and confidence. Go with speed, make this proposed arrangement known to your Lady; and Antonio, who shall accompany you, shall be the bearer of a letter from me to Alessandro Massimo."

Giovanna doubted of the ultimate success of this scheme; for she always suspected her Lady's partiality to Lusignan, and knew that her opinion of Mario was even less favourable than that which she entertained of his brother; but she started no objections. She thought it not advisable to throw any difficulties in the way of a plan which, as far as she was herself concerned, appeared calculated to forward her views.

Andrea had heard enough from Antonio to be able to word his letter in a manner which gave to falsehood the semblance of truth; and there was just enough of the latter for a basis, on which to erect the desired superstructure.

The remorse felt by Livia at the moment of alarm for her father and his states, had, as we have related, induced her almost to offer her

hand to the man whom she rejected. In that instant of agitation and distraction, she had said, —“Will you promise peace and forbearance if I give you my hand?” and this, as Antonio represented it, was a treaty into which she had entered ; for all this he had heard, and reported it to Andrea, who took advantage of it skilfully in his letter to Massimo.

He therefore hinted something of female caprice, glanced at want of faith in Octavio and his family, assured Massimo that the Lady had finally given her consent, and that he would not only stake his own honour for the truth of this assertion, but would send his letter by a confidential servant of his grandson, and a witness of the whole transaction. He then entered into his plan for a new arrangement, said he was unwilling to do any thing without the participation of his good ally, and dwelt long on the sincerity of his intentions, and the open frankness of all his measures. He ended by requesting that Massimo would suspend the restitution of the Lady as it was essential for her own honour, no less than for the general good, that she should not return to Ampiglione before all things were settled.

His chief object would have been to get Livia into his power ; but he was fearful of attempting it, or even of expressing a wish to that effect, lest Massimo should suspect more than he chose to

tell him. He contented himself with adding that he conceived how unpleasant it must be for the Lord of San Vito to retain her; and that if he were particularly desirous to place her under his protection, he would waive all objections, and pledge himself to treat her with the respect due to her rank and intended alliance with his family; but that of course such a measure would be most painful to his feelings, and could only be adopted by him to spare Massimo an interference which might be disagreeable to him.

He made a great merit of sending her principal attendant, while he gave it to be understood that, as this woman had voluntarily come to solicit his favour, there was every reason to believe that she had orders from her Lady to follow her; but that he had forborne asking her many questions, which Massimo might with greater propriety put to her, as well as to the bearer of this letter.

As soon as this was terminated and sealed with care, he hastened the departure of his agents, giving them directions how to act and what to say. Baldo was not forgotten, for Antonio was charged to shew no resentment towards him for the present, but on the contrary to say that he had only anticipated the intentions of the Lord of Saracinesco.

Andrea sent for his unhappy grandson, and thus addressed him:—

“ My dearest Mario! thou art at this moment my only staff, and my only consolation. I have weighed well thy words, and I am convinced that thou art right. Peace with Octavio Orsini is become not merely expedient but necessary. He knows not how to hold the rudder during a calm; but he weathers a storm with skill and intrepidity. Our united strength would be irresistible. I would therefore have thee go to him, my son, and once more endeavour to make peace between us. The task will, I know, be painful; for thou wilt think of thy fallen brother, when amongst his enemies.” (Here the countenance of Andrea assumed an expression of hatred that made his grandson shudder). “ But it is for our good; for the good of the people that will be committed to thy care when I shall be no more. Go therefore, Mario, and try to enter into some negotiation with Octavio. Perhaps even now it may not be too late for cementing that peace which I could wish had never been broken.”

Andrea would not disclose more openly the designs which he had at heart; and, by sending his grandson, he only sought to gain time, until he should know the intentions of Massimo.

Mario coloured; and was too much embarrassed to form a reply. He recollected his vow, and he thought of Seraphina; but these thoughts could not be guessed by Andrea, who concluded that the perplexity, which was very evident,

arose from the combat in Mario's mind between his desire of peace with Ampiglione, and his attachment to his late brother. Devoted as he was to him, his anxiety for peace had surprised Andrea, and it now occurred to him that, perhaps, his love for Seraphina was more powerful than he could have imagined. He therefore added,

“ Endeavour, as far as honor will permit, to pacify the mind of Octavio. Learn what may be his pretensions ; but say not a word on the subject of thy engagement to his youngest daughter.”

These last words were, at the present moment, a relief to the agitated feelings of Mario : and the wily Andrea did not fail to observe the alteration. He saw it with pleasure ; for he little suspected the cause ; and attributed it to far different sentiments. Still, however, guarded and cautious, he contented himself with dismissing him kindly, and entered into no farther explanation, only saying that he might order any thing he pleased, so as to appear with dignity on his embassy.

Left to himself, Andrea exulted in the prospect before him. “ Who knows,” thought he, “ whether all may not yet succeed in conformity with my wishes ? Mario, perhaps, prefers Livia to her sister, and Octavio may authorize the rupture of one engagement to make room for another. Livia, too, may be less perverse ; and

though I cannot forget the death of Pietro, vengeance may be suspended without being relinquished."

Mario was truly unfortunate. He had never entered heartily into any of the artful projects of Andrea; which was the principal reason of his being no favourite with him. He had joined the bold and lawless expeditions of his brother, more from affection for him, than from any inclination of his own. Happier times had been promised him by the union with Seraphina; and he had heartily concurred in the measures concerted for bringing it about. He deplored the unhappy result, but he had no power of preventing it; for his actions had always been secondary to those of others. His defective education, and a total absence of good advisers, left him no means of emancipating himself from the subjection in which his better nature was kept. He had been awakened to a sense of his situation; but he had too suddenly given himself up to a feeling, which, however laudable in itself, is too frequently wrong directed. He was conscious of the mischief which he had done, and of the unhappiness which he had caused during the short and violent course of his existence, an existence which might have been cut off, like that of his still more culpable brother, without the leisure of a moment for repentant sorrow; but he was not equally aware of the good which he might have

done, and which he had neglected to do, of the duties which he had left unperformed, and of the responsibility which awaited him. A renunciation of the world could not be justified in any point of view, circumstanced as he was. His brother's death, and the advanced age of Manero rendered it indispensable for him to watch over the welfare of a people whom he might soon be called to govern; and he thought of nothing but penances of various descriptions, and a total abstraction from society. Enveloped in a maze of error, he thought himself obliged to make some great and cruel sacrifice. The abandonment of worldly concerns, and the abjuration of worldly happiness, appeared to him, in the present instance, peculiarly meritorious: when a ray of hope seemed to break in upon him, and to point a way for his union with Seraphina, he resisted the alluring vision, and solemnly renewed his vow, while his beating heart rebelled against it; and he alternately suffered all the torments of self-reproach, and all the regrets of disappointed hope.

In this frame of mind he could hardly have ventured to approach Ampiglione, had not the final instructions of Andrea prohibited a renewal of his engagement. Wrapped in a sable garb, and attended by a numerous train in similar habiliments, he reached the castle of Octavio, after having previously asked and obtained safe conduct.

Octavio remarked his altered looks, and was not insensible to his affliction. He even received him with cordiality, and assured him that he attributed not to him the aggressions of which he had so much reason to complain, at the same time he declared that he would not enter into any negotiation for peace until Livia were restored.

Mario protested that he was ignorant of the place of her retreat, that he understood diligent search was making by order of his grandfather, and that he would himself spare no pains for effecting the discovery.

Julia was present at the conference: she was less concerned for the honour of the house of Orsini than for the success of Andrea's schemes, as far as she was acquainted with them; and she used every conciliatory argument for the purpose of renewing the treaty. Octavio, however, was inflexible. His parental feelings and his wounded honour equally prevented him from giving way, and all that he would grant was a truce of eight days; after which time, unless Livia were brought back to Ampiglione, he threatened destruction to Andrea and his states.

Mario took his leave in melancholy silence; and, after passing the outward gates, he looked back to gaze once more at the battlements, which enclosed the object of his hopeless passion. It seemed a last farewell; and his heart was more oppressed than ever.

He rode on ; and, as he mournfully retraced the path which he had once exultingly called that of love and glory, the most gloomy imaginations took possession of his mind. In every blast of wind he thought he heard the groans of his dying brother ; in every gleam of sunshine darting at intervals from between the rolling clouds, he seemed to view the portentous light which shone on the image in the chapel.

A troop of hunters crossed the road ; and the swift footed stag (20) which they were pursuing, sprang from rock to rock up a neighbouring hill, where he stood as if in defiance of its enemies. The attention of Mario was attracted by this adventure : for hunting had been his favourite amusement. He looked stedfastly at the animal, lost in thought, till again his wayward fancy became disturbed. On the head of the noble creature which, from the situation in which it stood, appeared of gigantic size, he beheld, as he conceived, the warning image, and heard it say "Quit thy vain sports ; quit the world, and all its crimes and follies !" His mind was alienated, and he arrived at Saracinesco in a state which hardly permitted him to relate the conversation between him and Octavio.

When he retired to his chamber, he abandoned himself to the deepest melancholy, and to the practises of the most austere penitence. A friar, who had been his preceptor, as also of Pietro,

was constant in his attendance, and had been particularly assiduous in trying to comfort him ever since the death of his brother. He was named Father Placido. His heart was good and affectionate, as far as his judgment would allow it to remain so ; but that was so limited by nature, and the narrow circle of his ideas so much strengthened by the discipline of his convent, that he could be of little resource for the re-establishment of healthful vigour in a disordered and depressed mind.

Placido made no distinction, because he comprehended none, between the dangerous sophistry, which, even in the thirteenth century, was propagating scepticism and infidelity, and the enlightened philosophy which tends to adorn and elevate our nature. All improvements were in his eye dangerous innovations ; the astrologer and the astronomer, the heresiarch, and the founder of a new university, were all confounded in his mind as pernicious to society ; and when his pupils had attained the age which emancipated them from his tuition, he thanked his patron Saint for having enabled him to preserve them from imbibing any of the errors incidental to those who travelled among infidels, and who brought home strange languages, and stranger manners.

He had taken pains to instil into them a great veneration for ascetic persons, and to be liberal in their donations to shrines reputed miraculous.

Regular in his own conduct, he wished them to be the same, but, by laying an equal stress on the most minute and frivolous practises, and on the most important points of moral and religious instruction, he failed in all. The young men soon became disgusted with a control which appeared to them at once ridiculous and fatiguing; and long before they were released from his government they had learned to despise it. Pietro in particular made a jest of all restraint; and not having been taught to discern what was essential for the regulation of his conduct, he gave into every excess as much out of opposition to the scrupulous strictness of his preceptor, as from the natural violence of his character. Mario, who, as we have said, looked up to his brother as to a leader and a model, was yet willing to spare the feelings of Placido when he saw him vexed at their proceedings. He would then persuade Pietro, who alone could raise contributions on their grandfather, to throw a few pieces at the Friar for some favourite devotion, and would add a kind word to pacify him.

Andrea's wishes for their education were suitable to his character. He recommended a knowledge of those sciences, arts, and accomplishments, which lead to the increase of wealth and power. In those times, and in the situation of Manero, his notions on this subject could not be very extensive. When his grandsons applied, as they

did willingly, to perfect themselves in horsemanship and martial exercises, he was pleased ; and when they would not attend to other studies, which he thought might enable them to manage their affairs prosperously, he ordered Placido to enforce greater obedience ; but he at the same time treated him as one of the meanest of his dependants ; which of course escaped not the observation of his grandsons. On the whole, however, Andrea praised the preceptor, for he remarked that he was not troublesome, told his beads quietly, and seemed to have no curiosity to discover the secrets of the family.

Mario had not been more attentive than his brother to the good man's instructions, but still he had always been his favourite ; for he would sometimes listen patiently to his stories of prodigies ; from which the rude and impatient Pietro invariably made his escape, with the addition now and then of some ludicrous expression of incredulity. He also neglected him when he was no longer his preceptor, and Mario on the contrary visited him occasionally, and manifested more kindness than he had shown when he was under his charge.

Placido now took occasion, from the melancholy of his remaining pupil, to re-establish himself in the castle, and to watch over him continually. He was always in his chamber, and being the only person, since the death of Pietro, with whom

Mario had any real intimacy, all the sorrows of his oppressed heart, and all the wanderings of his agitated mind, were vented before him. Placido wept, exhorted, and counselled, while he hailed this crisis of affliction as the forerunner of a complete conversion, which, as he said, he had constantly anticipated.

That his intentions were pure there can be no doubt, but it may easily be guessed that his mode of treating the mental malady of the unfortunate young man, served only to encrease it; and that Mario, having no other friend to whom he could cling in his distress, listened to him with gratitude and confidence.

CHAPTER XVII.

VARIOUS were the schemes of mortification and of penance which passed in rapid succession through the troubled mind of the unhappy Mario, till at length, worn out by contending passions and restless agitation, he was siezed with a violent fever, attended by delirium, and his grandfather was greatly alarmed ; for the disorder seemed to baffle the skill of all the physicians whom he could assemble.

Sometimes he raved of pilgrimages, of monasteries, of cells, and of caverns ; at others he would name Seraphina, and then start and exclaim, “ Is she still in the tower ? How could I witness such cruelty ? I might have saved her.” Then he would pray to himself, at least his lips were seen to move, and he appeared to be earnest in his

devotions. Again he would start and fancy that the images of Saints, which had been placed in his chamber by Placido, were speaking to him; and he would hide his head in dismay.

The good Placido was stationary beside his couch, listening to his ravings, and mourning over him. From time to time he was terrified by hearing him pronounce words which no one could understand, and endeavoured to exorcise the evil spirit under whose dominion he thought him. The state of Mario was indeed truly pitiable. He had youth and strength in his favour; but the disorder became so violent that all hope at length vanished, and his death was hourly expected.

In this state he remained for some time; but it proved to be the crisis of his malady. His bodily health was restored by degrees; his ravings ceased; but they were succeeded by a gloomy despondency, from which nothing could rouse him. He sat whole days in silence, scarcely noticing those who entered the apartment; and Manero began to fear that his reason was irretrievably lost.

Meantime the letter sent to San Vito had produced the desired effect. Prejudiced against the race of Orsini, there was no deceit or treachery of which Massimo could not suppose them capable; and he wondered that Andrea Manero should be anxious to renew any negotiation with an enemy whom he represented as so faithless.

At the same time Alessandro was not displeased with the prospect of pacific arrangements. He had received a visit on that subject from Cardinal Cesarini, the Bishop of Tivoli, who offered himself as a mediator, earnestly recommended mutual forgiveness and forbearance, and finally obtained from Massimo a promise that Livia should be restored to her father. He saw the Lady, communicated to her this pleasing intelligence, and departed from Ampiglione in full hope of accomplishing his benevolent purpose.

He was scarcely gone before the letter of Andrea arrived ; Giovanna was sent to attend on her Lady, but Massimo was not impatient to ask questions of Antonio. He was vexed with himself for the unsuccessful share which he had taken in a quarrel, as he now thought, unworthy of his interference. He was conscious that he owed to Octavio a life which might have been his forfeit under the walls of Ampiglione, and, although he could not propose peace without an apparent acknowledgement of inferiority in the struggle, he was desirous of being at liberty to pursue plans of higher importance. The conversation held with Sciarra was of great interest ; his wounds began to heal, and his health was sufficiently restored to permit a renewal of his correspondence with the Ghibelines of Tuscany and Lombardy, and to form combinations for dispossessing Charles of Anjou of his newly acquired kingdoms.

In Conradine the legitimate line of Swabia was become extinct ; but James, King of Arragon, had power and pretensions in right of his wife, and had begun to solicit the support of those who were hostile to Charles. On these considerations Massimo had acceded to the wishes of Cardinal Cesarini, and was disposed to let Manero make peace if he could ; contenting himself with remaining for the present an inactive enemy of the house of Orsini.

It remained for him to determine what was to be done with the daughter of that house who had claimed his protection. To detain her at his own castle would be provoking fresh hostilities ; and he was too honourable to give her up to Manero. He was at the same time unwilling to counteract his plans by sending her immediately to her father, after all that was specified in the letter. Andrea, if offended, might at length declare for the Guelphs, or, if kept in good humor, might espouse the cause of Arragon with the Ghibelines, for he had cautiously held out a hope that, should every thing succeed to his wish, he might consent to take part in affairs which he had hitherto avoided from motives of prudence.

Biassed by these considerations, the noble Massimo condescended to temporize, and he wrote, in answer to Andrea, that he was very soon going to Rome on important business, but should leave his castle in a good state of defence,

which he also recommended to him with respect to his own possessions ; that the lady should accompany Beatrice on a visit to her sister-in-law, widow of the late and mother of the present Prince of Palestrina, and that she might remain in that place in safety, until the negotiation with Ampiglione should be concluded or broken off.

Massimo was indeed anxiously impatient to join his friends in the capital ; as he knew they only waited for his presence to discuss several points of material concern ; and he had told Cardinal Cesarini that he should there expect his answer as to the settlement of affairs with Octavio. He had promised him that Livia should be restored without loss of time, and to retract a promise made, or even to defer its accomplishment, was not in his character ; but party spirit, that destructive warper of conscience and falsifier of honor, prevailed in this instance ; and as to Beatrice, he knew that she would be glad to avoid the pomp and bustle of Rome.

She had long wished to pass some time with the lady of Palestrina, and was pleased when he communicated to her his intentions on the subject, together with the motives which induced him to send Livia with her, as to a neutral place, where she would be more in the light of a guest than a prisoner.

He next dispatched a messenger to Sciarra Colonna desiring him to meet him at Rome for

the purpose of holding conferences with their friends there; informing him that in the meanwhile Beatrice would visit his mother, conducting with her a noble hostage, whom it was superfluous to recommend to his honourable protection.

Decision and despatch were principal features in the character of Massimo. On the eve of his departure for Rome, and of that of the ladies for Palestrina, he wrote to Orsini, and commanded that the letter should be taken to him on the following day. It was conceived in these terms :

ALESSENDRO MASSIMO TO OCTAVIO ORSINI.

“ Your daughter, whether a voluntary fugitive or carried away by force, claimed my protection and obtained it. My allies consider it expedient that she should remain as a hostage, until the question of war or peace shall be decided. The Lady Beatrice, my wife, will obtain for her a hospitable asylum in the neutral and noble residence of Palestrina, whither she is herself going. Of this I inform you, as I have not forgotten the feelings of a father.”

When Alessandro had completed this act, as he thought, of generous revenge, he made known to Beatrice what he had done, and requested that she would inform her guest of the proceeding, and intimate to her that she was welcome to write to Ampiglione by the same conveyance.

Livia complained of breach of faith, when she learned that she was not to be sent home immediately, but to be taken as a hostage to Palestrina, while Beatrice merely said as much as she thought necessary for justifying her lord, and comforted her with the assurance that hostilities were suspended, and that Manero was using every effort to bring about a lasting peace with her father. She next brought her to contribute as much as should be in her power to this happy reconciliation; and said that, if she wished to open her heart to her father or sister, the messenger should attend her orders before his departure for her native city.

Livia perceived that resistance was fruitless, and might be construed as ingratitude. She withdrew to her chamber, when she related in letters to Octavio and Seraphina, all that had happened to her since she was taken from them.

Beatrice, from a motive of delicacy, instead of asking for the letters, sent, with the approbation of Massimo, the messenger to the door of Livia's apartment, where he was met by Giovanna, and he told her that he was ordered to take charge of any letters which her lady chose to send to Ampiglione.

Giovanna went in and returned, saying, "my lady commands me only to request that you will assure the Lord Octavio she is well and happy, that she repents of her error, and that she wishes

nothing more than peace between him and the Lords of San Vito and Saracinesco."

The messenger, who had only waited for this last commission, sprang on his horse and departed; while the treacherous attendant, in possession of the letters, found means to forward them to Andrea Manero, as the first proof of her attachment to his interest.

Massimo was already on his way to Rome, and the ladies prepared for their journey to Palestrina; Livia silently indignant, and Beatrice employing the means in her power to soothe and console her. She was not disposed to believe the insinuations thrown out in Manero's letter. She had heard too much of the wildness of Pietro not to believe him alone guilty of the fault which had been committed, though she recollected with a sigh the conduct of her own daughter, and she knew not how far her guest was to be excused. In all cases she knew that she was to be pitied; and, for the kind and gentle Beatrice, that was more than enough.

When Massimo's letter was delivered to Octavio, it relieved his mind from great uneasiness with respect to his eldest daughter; but the message, delivered to him without any letter from her, appeared to him very extraordinary. Feeling however the highest esteem for Beatrice, he was less concerned than he otherwise would have been on such an occasion; and reverting to the cause

of complaint which Massimo had against the house of Orsini, he could not be surprised at his allusion to it; nor at the high tone assumed by him, notwithstanding his defeat.

He soon after received a similar communication from Andrea Manero, a few hours being wanting for the expiration of the truce. He acquainted him with what he called the successful result of his enquiries, enlarged on the pains he had taken to discover the place of the lady's retreat, and on the inclination which he felt for the re-establishment of peace, to which, he said, his natural inclination, no less than his advanced age, inclined him; adding that he was free to confess that he still wished for an alliance with the family.

He then informed Octavio that he was in great affliction, on account of the severe illness of his remaining grandson, his sole comfort, and the heir of his possessions. Should he recover, Manero offered, as the only reparation in his power, for the insult of which Orsini complained, a change of engagement, and solicited for Mari the hand of Livia.

Octavio was, in many respects, satisfied with this communication; which appeared to his candid mind, a justification of Andrea. He was grieved, but not astonished, to hear of Mario's illness; for he had observed his altered looks, and the change in his deportment. He felt com-

passion for him and his grandson; but he would not decide on so nice a question without more consideration, and only replied that he should take time to reflect on the proposal of Manero.

With Cardinal Cesarini he had never been on terms of intimacy; but when he proposed himself as mediator, Orsini willingly listened; and hostilities were suspended on all sides, until the contracting parties should consent to arrangements for a more permanent reconciliation.

Ampiglione was now triumphant; but the heart of Octavio was sad, and he had little around him to cheer or relieve his mind. Julia, disappointed by the failure of her schemes, and certain that she had made an enemy of Livia, could easily perceive that she had lost much of her influence over her lord, and that she was not trusted by Seraphina; yet, as she was undoubtedly the person who, in a rational point of view, had least suffered by the recent events, she had before her the plain path of endeavouring to console and enliven those with whom she was connected. Far from acting thus, she indulged herself in querulous expressions, declared herself to be the most unfortunate, and the most neglected of women, and continually hinted that Octavio had no regard for her, that his thoughts were engrossed by his daughters, or by the absent Lusignan, and that she believed he preferred him to the whole of his family. She would then

launch into complaints and lamentations, accusing the presumptuous stranger, as she called him, of all the disasters which had occurred since his departure, and insinuated that he had fascinated the two sisters to such a degree as to render them completely ungovernable.

Seraphina's spirits, indeed, sunk under the load of grief which she had experienced, and the absence of her sister; but she was consistent in all she did; and she tried to rouse herself for her father's sake, she accompanied him in his rides and in his walks, and, whenever they were left to themselves, he seemed to feel great delight in her society.

Open and unguarded in his conversation, Octavio would often talk of the absent Lusignan, often praise and commend him for the steps which he had taken, and lament the little justice done him by Julia. Sometimes he would go so far as to say, that he hoped he might one day become a member of the family.

It is easy to conceive the pain felt by Seraphina when her father talked in this manner. She knew that he was deceived in many respects; but her tongue was tied by honour and propriety. When Octavio expressed any doubts as to the steady resolution of Livia, and urged the possibility of her having being influenced by caprice, sometimes to reject, and at others to shew favour, to the unworthy Pietro, Seraphina defended her

with warmth of interest and clearness of argument. She accounted for her not having written by the messenger, ascribing it to motives of prudence; and assured her father that nothing but the apprehension of his danger, and the consciousness of having been, in some measure, the cause of it, could have led her sister to address the bold intruder in other terms than those of abhorrence. These things she knew had been misrepresented by Julia, and she felt it her duty to throw light on them; but there were points on which she could not be so explicit, and she dreaded every question that might lead to them.

“Livia has too high a spirit,” said Orsini, “but I confess, dearest Seraphina, I cannot now blame her for having refused her consent—if she really disapproved, as she had reason, the character of Pietro. I was deceived in that respect; but she certainly said she would choose him in preference to Sir Guy de Lusignan; and yet we thought, as I still think, that a mutual attachment subsisted between them, when I put that question to her. What could she mean?”

“I know not: I cannot say,” answered the blushing and trembling Seraphina.

“I see thy difficulty, my love,” answered Octavio, “but thou mayest freely tell me all, without treachery to thy sister. I only wish her happiness and thine. Would I had sooner been informed of sentiments which, had I known

them, would have induced me to act otherwise than I did! But it is not too late—the situation of our affairs is totally changed. My long sojourn in the east had made me a stranger in my native land: I was surrounded by jealous neighbours; and, when I began to order my affairs, I was called off to the Neapolitan wars; the very success of which increased their enmity. I took the steps which prudence dictated to secure allies; and, although a temporary cloud gathered over us, it is now dispersed; and our prospects are brighter than ever. The neighbouring barons see that I can resist them, and sue for my forbearance. What thinkest thou Seraphina? Pietro is no more—he has paid the forfeit of his insolence. His brother's conduct has been equally affectionate and manly. His hand was linked in thine, and my blessing sanctioned the engagement. Thou hast never shewn repugnance to its fulfilment; and let not his having taken up arms against us prove injurious to him in thy sight. He could act no other part; and I well perceived how he regretted it. He loves thee, Seraphina; and, though Andrea may think it necessary to proffer his hand, already plighted to thee, as an atonement for the insult offered to thy sister, I will accept it only according to our first agreement; and, perhaps, Livia may hereafter be united to one dear to us all, but more especially to her; one who shall be to thee

a brother, and support the honour of our noble house when I am with my ancestors."

In what manner was Seraphina to answer these heart-rending communications? Such they undoubtedly were to her; and, yet, frank as was her disposition, and indulgent as was her father, how could she reply in such a manner as to be just to her sister, to Lusignan, and to herself?

Could she undeceive Octavio, and tell him that not her sister but herself was the object of his affections? Was she in any way authorized to say this? or could she deny the attachment of Livia to the friend of their youth? She remained silent, and her father urged her not to reply; for he still attributed her embarrassment to the confidence placed in her by Livia. "It is enough," he said, "I commend thy discretion, my beloved child. Thou art the chief comfort of my existence; and if the prayers of a father can avail to bring down on thy duteous and affectionate path every temporal and celestial blessing, thou mayest be sure of obtaining them."

He ceased as Julia joined them with some of their guests; and Seraphina withdrew, revolving in her mind the fatal circumstances of which she was the victim. She saw no prospect of peace but in the conclusion of the luckless contract of marriage. She knew that Livia would be still more reluctant to give her hand to Mario than to his brother. She had herself promised, in the

most solemn manner, to accept him, and she could not recede when her father was desirous of waving every objection. She felt for the sorrows and for the illness of the unfortunate young man ; and from the whole tenor of his conduct since the death of his brother, she did him the justice to believe that his faults were less his own than were his virtues. His forbearance when he might have taken the life of the soldier who killed Pietro was related to her by Vincenza ; for the man had not been sparing in his communication of it ; and this act of pious humanity could not fail of meeting her approbation ; but she still looked forward with dismay to the completion of her engagement. The image of Lusignan too often obtruded itself on her mind ; and she had endeavoured to banish it, till the conversation with Octavio, which we have detailed, recalled that image in a manner the most forcible and painful to her feelings.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE sufferings of Mario by degrees became less acute, when no longer irritated by external circumstances; and the melancholy which had succeeded the ravings of delirium appeared also gradually to give way. The natives of this fortunate region, where all tends to elevate the imagination, and to excite sensibility, are sometimes the victims of excess of feeling to a degree scarcely known in other countries. Rarely do they feel the gloomy influence of depressed spirits without a moral cause for that depression; but when affliction seizes on them, their nerves with fearful vibration record the painful reflections of the mind. Mario appeared to have passed the worst; and was recovering the usual tone of his character, when Andrea, eager to seize the first

instant in which he thought him capable of listening to his projects, after a little indifferent conversation, entered on the subject which he had most at heart.

“My dear Mario,” he said, “words cannot express the happiness I feel in seeing you restored to that calmness of mind which will allow you to listen to what I have say; and your disposition gives me reason to hope that we may soon put an end to these fatal broils that have brought us into our present state of affliction for the past, and inquietude for the future. There is no reason why the loss of your brother should preclude all chance of alliance with the house of Orsini. To his own rashness in a great measure his fate must be attributed; and a private soldier struck the blow. Orsini, it is true, is still offended; but the restitution of his daughter will pacify him; and that can be accomplished whenever I wish it. Whatever may be your resentment against the family—whatever may be your grief for the loss of your brother, an heiress, whose beauty and endowments rank high amongst those who adorn our coasts, ought not to be indifferent to you, and new arrangements might be made to facilitate what would lead to the good and honour of both parties.”

Mario turned pale and red by turns as he attentively listened to his grandfather, whose words he by no means understood in the sense

which they were intended half to veil and half to convey. Peace, joy, and happiness, seemed to court his acceptance, and yet his rash vow obliged him to dash the sparkling goblet from his parched and trembling lip. He strove to reply; but his voice became inarticulate, and all that Andrea could hear distinctly, was — “No; Seraphina never can be mine.”

The Lord of Saracinesco gave him a short time to compose himself, and then, looking at him earnestly, he said, — “My dear Mario, I cannot guess the cause of this sudden passion; but I was not speaking of Seraphina. The contract with her, forming part of our first treaty, was annulled by Livia’s refusal of thy brother. Our honour demands that she should be ours; that the eldest daughter, the principal heiress of Ampiglione, should be granted to our second proposal; and Orsini will be the more ready to comply with it, as he must be aware of the publicity of her adventure; and of the disadvantage occasioned by her flight to her fame and fortunes. Our request is just and moderate; and there can be little doubt of her compliance after what has passed. She is now at Palestrina, under the protection of two noble matrons, the mother and the aunt of Sciarra Colonna. Let not him carry off so fair a prize; and of this be assured, that it is my firm determination. I wished for the double marriage, while Pietro yet lived, because I was

desirous to obviate the intrusion of some headstrong youth, hostile to our interests, into the family of Orsini; an evil which would have produced unceasing dissension; but Seraphina is of a thoughtful, quiet temper; and, with the assistance of Julia, we may induce her to assume a monastic habit. At all events, by securing the elder, we secure our influence over the states of Orsini."

While Manero was speaking, the mind of his grandson experienced a singular revolution. Distracted with the thought that he might have been united to Seraphina, had he not sworn to relinquish all terrestrial pursuits, he could not have refused the proffered boon without a torturing pang, which probably must have ended in permanent insanity. He was now relieved from these gloomy ideas; and, comparatively speaking, happy. It was no sacrifice to refuse the hand of Livia, whom he neither loved nor considered in any other light than as the cause of his brother's death. He therefore gave full time to Andrea, to develop his plan, and then answered him with greater calmness than he had manifested since his first retreat from Ampiglione.

"My honoured Lord!" he said, "I have been warned to abandon the vain and barbarous course of life which I have hitherto led; and I have pronounced at the foot of the altar a solemn vow to dedicate myself wholly to nobler and impor-

tant pursuits. I have no longer aught to do with this world, and I can only offer up my orisons for the good of my family."

Manero started at hearing this, as if he had unwarily trodden on a viper. He overwhelmed his unfortunate grandson with the most bitter invectives; and the Friar happening to enter the room while he was thus venting his rage, he accused him of having turned the head of his pupil.

Placido endeavoured to soothe his anger; but in reply to some devotional expressions used by the good man to this effect, Andrea drew his dagger and would have stabbed him to the heart, had not the weapon been wrested from his feeble grasp by the stronger hand of Mario.

The Friar, however, was not permitted to remain at Saracinesco. He was conveyed, by order of the irritated Baron, to a convent on the Apennines; where, through his influence, he was detained a prisoner.

Mario sought in vain to pacify his offended grandsire. Nothing short of a compliance with all his wishes could satisfy him, and Mario remained firm in his purpose of adopting an ascetic mode of life. He began to display an independence of spirit, and a decision of will, that had never before been perceived in him. Elated for a time with the new character which he had assumed, his enthusiasm led him to consider hardships and

sacrifices as means of bliss ; and, relieved from the oppressive weight of thinking himself the artificer of his own misery, all the rest appeared to him only as trials for the exercise of his virtues, and the foundation of his future felicity.

He resumed his former activity, though differently directed. He looked pale and thin ; but his countenance became more interesting, and his eyes beamed with intelligence and sensibility.

He was then scarcely twenty years of age ; and what wonder, if, devoid of solid instruction, and born in a country where the imagination often soars beyond the atmosphere of worldly calculations, he gave himself up entirely to the chimera that engrossed him. Seraphina was still the idol of his worship, the day dream of his fancy, and the nightly vision that consoled his grief by sympathy, and rewarded his labours by the smile of approbation.

Andrea, tenacious of his purpose, was resolved, if possible, to subdue this unusual obstinacy of his grandson ; not from affection, or from any motive relative to his welfare, but because he had no other person to accomplish his ambitious and interested projects. He looked on Mario's present state of mind as a new species of insanity, and consulted his physicians on the subject, but he derived no comfort from them. They had done all in the power of their art. Mario was neither

in ill health nor incapable of reasoning on ordinary subjects.

Andrea next applied to a person whom he lodged in his castle with that mysterious secrecy which characterized most of his actions, but which he never more carefully observed than in the present instance. This person was an astrologer, and inhabited one of the highest turrets of the building. Manero hardly trusted him; and yet he liked not to undertake any enterprise without commanding him to observe the stars. The predictions sometimes proved true, and on many occasions it might not have been difficult to account for the knowledge possessed by the astrologer; for Pietro had discovered and consulted him without Andrea's knowledge, and even without that of his brother; by which means it had been in the power of the Seer to deceive both Manero and his grandson, while he gratified their curiosity by the intelligence which he gained from each of them separately. That resource was now wanting; but he discovered other channels of information, and various methods, which, added to some skill in forming probable conjectures, rendered him still capable of imposing to a certain degree on his cautious but not incredulous patron.

When the Saracens were expelled from most of the towns which they had won during their piratical expeditions to the coast of Italy, they

retained one of the most considerable of their acquisitions, the strong city of Nocera, and some of their descendants were yet to be found in other places which they had occupied; more especially in the chief residence of Manero, which bore their name. The astrologer was one of these, and had inherited the science, which he professed, as the only remaining treasure of his ancestors. A distressed and a degraded people too often become artful deceivers. They who had maintained themselves independent at Nocera followed the customs, manners, and religion of their original country, and preserved them, with their insulated dominion, by engaging, not unwisely, to support one of the factions contending for power. They had declared for the house of Swabia in the recent contest; and, strong in the succour of the Ghibelines, they had resisted all the efforts of Charles of Anjou with singular intrepidity and success. Many of the Saracens left in other towns had taken refuge within their walls, and added strength to their forces; but others, unwilling to remove, had outwardly adopted the habit and mode of worship of the Italians, and retaining their ancient prejudices while associating with those whom they disliked, were neither faithful to their former, nor attached to their present masters.

Of this number was Benfadi, a man of somewhat advanced age, and of no contemptible ac-

quirements. Most of his connexions dwelt at Nocera; but he was not known to have any communication with them. He had been dissipated and prodigal in his youth; and he depended for his present subsistence on the very limited bounty of the Lord of Saracinesco.

Andrea climbed with difficulty the steep and half mouldering steps that led to the turret, as soon as the chief inhabitants of his castle were retired to rest; and he found Benfadi employed in observing the heavens.

“What readest thou in that splendid book?” said Manero, “thy readings have of late done me little good.”

“Alas!” answered the astrologer; “we cannot control the will of fate. My lord knows that I always predicted mischief would arise from the projected union with the friends of Anjou. The aspect of the heavens but too clearly announced it when I consulted them on this fatal subject.”

“I will hear no more of Swabia nor of Anjou,” answered Manero in an angry tone. “Thou art perhaps a knave; but shouldst thou attempt to deceive me, tremble!—Tell me what thou readest at present, and forbear to name the past.”

“My lord may doubt my words,” resumed Benfadi humbly; “but the event shall prove their truth. I was consulting the planets on the fortunes of his noble house, well knowing that

he would command me to enquire their future tenor."

"For that I am come," said Andrea; "Art thou aware of the madness or folly of my grandson?"

"The noble Mario," answered the astrologer "would account it sin to visit my ethereal dwelling."

"I know he would," replied Andrea: "and his wiser brother would have thought it folly; but enough of them. What say the stars? Shall my fair estates, so long possessed by lineal descent, shall they, or shall they not, pass into a collateral branch?"

"Behold these lines," said Benfadi, shewing a rude mathematical figure traced by his trembling hand; "behold them well,—seest thou not the fiery Mars, the treacherous Venus? The fate of thy unhappy grandson is there as clearly visible as in the page of history."

"Revert not to it," exclaimed Manero: "I will not think of it. I ask not thy thoughts on the past. Expand to me the future."

"To that I was coming," said the astrologer, pointing to the tablet. "Observe that wandering star! It seems to wander; but it has its destined course. Behold that line which crosses the tablet, and stops not till it is lost in the margin. That line implies uninterrupted succession; uninterrupted save by intermediate death. Examine

it well, my lord. It is blackened by the baneful influence of yonder star, but not dissevered. See, the line continues, and resumes its colour."

"How?" cried Manero; "Understand I well thy words? Am I to survive both my grandsons? and is the son of Mario to succeed me?"

"Ask no more," replied Benfadi gravely; "to be over curious is only tempting fate."

"One thing more and I have done;" said the pleased Andrea, "shall my remaining grandson espouse the heiress of Orsini?"

"Ask no more," repeated Benfadi with energetic firmness; while a whistling wind arose, and dark rolling clouds concealed the sparkling characters, which he had been studying. Andrea was unwilling to depart without a solution of all his doubts; but the manner in which the astrologer spoke made a strong impression on his mind.

"He has never spoken so clearly before," said Andrea to himself. "He dares not deceive me so grossly—he knows his danger."

"Here is thy meed," continued he, giving him some pieces of gold; "and should thy prediction be accomplished, when an infant heir of Saracinesco and Sambuci shall be placed in my arms, thou shalt receive the quadruple of this sum, and moreover that liberty for which thou hast so often wearied me."

The astrologer bowed with an air of confidence, and Manero returned to his apartment,

where he meditated on the measures most likely to produce the advantages which he had in contemplation.

“It is evident,” said he to himself, “that if I may trust what I have seen on Benfadi’s tablet, Mario will not adhere to his purpose of abandoning worldly pursuits. I was wrong to disquiet myself. He will marry; but will it be the heiress of Ampiglione? He said—no, Seraphina never can be mine. What meant he by that exclamation? Perhaps I misunderstood his meaning and his foolish passion for her may have deranged his mind. Were she removed, all might be well; and his inflammable heart might burn for Livia.—Or Livia might be removed, effectually removed; and Seraphina then would be sole heiress:—I must think—had I to do with Octavio alone, my task were not so difficult; but Massimo, Sciarra Colonna;—these are men of harder mould.”

In these reflections Manero passed a considerable portion of the night; and when he arose in the morning he was informed that Mario had left the castle totally unattended, not for the purpose of hawking, as had been his supposed intention, but as it would seem on some distant pilgrimage, for when his attendants entered his chamber at dawn of day, they found his usual habits but not their master; and the sentinels declared he had not passed the gates; the con-

jecture therefore was that he had climbed the hill from the rocks above the castle gardens, and this was soon confirmed by a goatherd who reported having met a pilgrim very early in that direction.

When Manero was informed of his grandson's departure, he was at first considerably discomposed; but on reflection he hoped the best, and concluded that when the wanderer should have performed his devotions at some shrine, in which he or Father Placido had confidence, he would return and comply with his wishes; for the conversation with the astrologer had made such an impression on Andrea's mind that he could not be as uneasy as otherwise would have been the case; and he contented himself with dispatching a trusty messenger to the convent, where the friar was confined, in the supposition that Mario might possibly be gone to seek his old preceptor.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE must now look back on Livia and Beatrice, as they slowly ascended the hill of Palestrina⁽²¹⁾ after passing the magnificent and extensive vestiges of the imperial villa, and the circular temple of Serapis. They were carried in litters, lined with silk, by mules, adorned with sumptuous trappings and ostrich feathers. A splendid retinue attended them on horseback, and four youths, gaily habited, ran before them, holding wands resembling the Caduceus of Mercury.

Half-way up the hill, on the summit of which stood the strong fortress of San Pietro, appeared the beautiful and populous city of Palestrina,

the ancient Præneste, crowned with the palace of the noble Sciarra, and illuminated by the rays of the sun, now declining towards the horizon. The heart of Beatrice, however, withered by affliction, and chastened by the purest sentiments of devotion, expanded with a feeling somewhat resembling pride, as she approached the lofty mansion where she first breathed the vital air.

Her nephew, Sciarra, met her at the foot of the semi-circular steps, that once led to the sanctuary of the celebrated temple of fortune, and now to the princely halls of which he was the master.

He greeted her with that affectionate respect which he felt for her; but he was displeased with Massimo for sending a hostage to his castle, and still more so when he learned that she was an Orsini. The face and figure that struck him when he met her in the apartments of Beatrice, at San Vito, would have been differently welcomed in other circumstances, and with another name; for he had imbibed much of the resentment of Massimo against Octavio, and he would not trust himself with casting one glance on this unwelcome guest, although the companion of Beatrice, whom he respected and loved as a saint and a Colonna.

Livia was by no means ambitious of attracting his attention; nor even desirous of knowing what impression she had made at their former

meeting. She felt herself a prisoner, and she had been taught, though in a milder school, the prejudices of rival families. Her only care was to maintain a dignified deportment, and an air which might repel all intrusion on her meditations.

A few tears stole down the cheeks of Beatrice, as she entered the spacious doorway beneath the shield, on which was pictured the sacred column, with its proud motto, "Break, but not bend." That column which, brought from the Holy Land, by one of their pious ancestors, once inspired humbler ideas, and sunk the name and honours of ancient Rome in its devout appropriation to their family. The manly, graceful child of Sciarra ran to meet his aunt with the glow of health and unsubdued vivacity. His dark hair, curled in ringlets over a brow open as day; and his eyes, sparkling with intelligence, were shaded, but not veiled, by their long dark lashes. His form indicated strength and lightness, while its perfect symmetry and proportion appeared through the tunic, which concealed neither his ivory shoulders nor his beautifully rounded arms.

Sciarra introduced, with triumph, the lovely boy; for much he resembled him; and he sprang into the arms of Beatrice, who clasped him to her bosom, and covered his forehead with kisses. From her he flew to Livia, with a fondness that

could not fail to rouse her from her painful reflections, and forced her to return, in some degree, his caresses. The eye of Sciarra was attracted to the group, and rested there; for he had not power to withdraw it, until the lady of the mansion made her appearance.

She was tall and stately, grave in her demeanour, and without any peculiar expression of countenance. She welcomed her sister-in-law and Livia with formal courtesy, and conducted them to the sumptuous apartments prepared for their reception; while Sciarra, after taking leave of Beatrice, snatched the hand of his son and led him down to the terrace, where his attendants were waiting for him with his horses. The child begged to be placed before him on the impatient charger, at least for the descent of the hill, the declivity of which was lessened by the various angles formed by the road and followed the different planes or terraces that designated the construction of the temple of fortune and its dependancies.

Colonna supported the spirited boy in his strong grasp, and rode with him till they arrived in the valley; when he consigned him to the care of two servants who had followed their young master, and pursued his journey to the capital.

Meantime his mother, the Lady Constantia, commanded refreshments to be brought, and then left her guests to themselves. Beatrice retired to

the oratory, and Livia remained at an open balcony, whence was enjoyed a prospect of wondrous extent and beauty, and incomparable for the recollections which it was calculated to produce.

As she stood gazing at it, the little Sciarra entered the hall, ran up to her and caught her hand : he could not speak ; for he was too proud to weep, and his father's departure had its usual effect of damping his natural vivacity, and depriving him of every source of delight and amusement.

Sciarra Colonna took pleasure in teaching his boy every knightly exercise proportioned to his strength. Only seven years of age, he could, from his father's instructions, manage a pigmy lance with dexterity and justness of aim ; he could wield the harmless sword, and protend the light buckler with an agility and a grace not to be described. Sometimes with a branch of myrtle he would imitate the fearful contest of the Scimitar, and at others he would stand fixed in a commanding attitude, directing the military evolutions of the little natives, or, as an ancient Roman would have called them, " the future people" of Palestrina.

But when Colonna was away these martial sports were laid aside, or could be only imperfectly performed. A preceptor, named Gualtiero, had then the charge of young Sciarra, and was of course to teach him other learning and other

sciences. He found means during the frequent absence of the warlike lord to captivate the attention and direct the early genius of his pupil ; but when Colonna was at home, nothing but mimic warfare could be performed, nothing could attract a listening ear but the recital of martial exploits.

Gualtiero followed him to the balcony, and invited him to walk ; but he clung to Livia, and the preceptor, finding her engaged in the contemplation of the scene before her, began to explain the objects as they met her eye.

“Behold,” he said, “the Pontine islands to the left, once peopled with melancholy exiles ; where the good Octavio, and the guilty Julia alike terminated a wretched existence ! See the promontory of Circe ! Appears it not to be an island ? You cannot distinguish the neck of land that unites it to the continent, covered, no doubt, by the sea in Homer’s time ; for he could not be incorrect : here you may trace much of the voyage of Ulysses ; and even of the still more ancient navigation of the Argonauts. Look on those primeval mountains, which compose part of the long chain of the Apennines. See how they rear their hoary heads, and how their sides are studded with towns and cities !”

Livia asked the name of several of these. None were devoid of interest ; for none had been left unsung by the poet, or uncelebrated by the historian. Her eye was next attracted by the

silvery current of the Anio, and by its junction with the Tiber, following, as she gazed, the yellow waves calmly rolling towards the Mediterranean sea, and dividing into various branches near the port of Ostia, and the sacred island. The sun gleamed on the little lakes of the spacious plain, diversified by groves of cypress and of ilex ; while avenues of elms, regular and continued to a great length, were seen leading to the baronial castles, and intersecting the country. On the hills appeared the lofty pine, the fir, and the larch tree, and nature in all her pleasing variety seemed to vie with art in the wide extended scene before them.

Where could the wandering eye repose in such a prospect? Where but on the seven hills adorned with the noblest edifices and fairest gardens, but far more so by the memory of past greatness, the immortal city, the throne of empire and of glory?

Gualtiero perceived the looks of Livia fixed in that direction, and he said, — “ Yes ; there must the eye, there must the imagination rest. Daily as I contemplate that wondrous city, I revolve in my mind its fortunes and its pre-eminence. Observe, Lady, those three eminences ; two of which are closely joined, and the third more distant ; the Capitol, the Palatine, and the Vatican ! From these three seats of empire have

not all the nations of this world been successively governed?"

The orator was here interrupted by an exclamation of his young pupil,—“I wish I were at Rome,” said he, “for my father is nearly arrived by this time.”

“And where would you live if you were there?” asked Gualtiero.

“In the Capitol to be sure,” answered the child. “My father should be Consul. No; he should be Dictator, and I would be his Master of the Horse.”

At this moment Beatrice entered, and Livia, turning to her, said,—“The man may well be proud who has such a lovely boy, and who from his castle looks down on all this greatness.”

“Say rather,” answered the matron, “may he be humble! Let him consider his child as a precarious blessing, and when he looks on that great city, let him remember that his ancestors were creatures of a day! The height on which this noble castle stands may serve to show him an ample field for meditation on the vain pursuits of human life. This was, it seems, the temple of fortune; and vessels struck their sails when they passed in sight of it. So the house of Colonna stands on a proud eminence; but the more it catches the gazer’s eye, the more it is exposed to the malignant darts of envy. We cannot bend; but, alas! we may be broken and dispersed.”

Livia was astonished to hear the mild, and, as she guessed, unlettered Beatrice utter sentiments and remarks that savoured of more energy and information than she believed her to possess : but Beatrice was anxious for Massimo and for Sciarra ; she always dreaded the consequences of their meetings at Rome, and her spirits, agitated by these apprehensions, no less than by the sight of Palestrina, gave to her expressions a strength and animation above the ordinary tenor of her conversation, a circumstance not uncommon in a country where eloquence is the result of feeling.

It was not surprise alone that Livia experienced. She shuddered at what was said of the house of Colonna ; for she predicted similar calamities to that of Orsini. The gloom of sadness overspread her countenance, and the beauteous prospect faded before her eyes. She sat down and bent her head in mournful silence.

“Are you not well?” said little Sciarra, “or are you sorry, as I am, that my father goes to Rome? No doubt you are,” added he, putting his face close to hers, and whispering in her ear, “for this castle is very dull when he is away ; but I will stay with you whenever I can ; and I will shew you the armoury, and the chapel underground, and the Mosaic pavement with all the Egyptian figures, and the galleys, and the animals.”

In the frank and lively manners of this child, in the affectionate kindness of Beatrice, and in the varied learning and information of Gualtiero, Livia found comfort; but when day after day elapsed without letters or message from her father or Seraphina, she was displeased and uneasy.

The Lady Constantia was cold and reserved. Bitter in her animosity against the Guelphs, she extended her dislike to every individual of their families, and the conduct of Octavio in supporting Charles and the Pontiff had been too prominent not to excite her hatred.

Gualtiero had been chosen preceptor for the heir of Palestrina, as much for his Ghibeline principles as for his talent and literary acquirements. The sarcasms which he threw out against the Popes and their gallic allies, first gained him the favour of Sciarra Colonna; but he deserved it by more essential merits, for he was a man of genius and observation, fond of study, and clear in his mode of communicating knowledge; too much of a sceptic perhaps on some points, and on some occasions too much of a satirist; but he was neither an interested nor an immoral man. He was of the disappointed party at Florence, and had suffered in fortune from the opposite faction; but this was not his grievance, and he might easily have recovered his losses by a compliance with certain forms, and by a prudent silence; but

he had not philosophy sufficient to tolerate those whom he disliked the more for seeing them triumphant, and he chose rather to be a victim than to act the insignificant part of a person not to be considered as dangerous. He had indeed neither activity nor mischief enough in his composition to be a formidable antagonist to men in power. His opinions were chiefly speculative. He had the greatest veneration for the ancient Greeks and Romans, and he conceived that, had he lived in those times, he should have had a better idea of human nature than he now entertained. Yet it is highly probable that he might have disagreed with some of the leading men of Athens and Rome, as he did with those of Florence and Pisa. His heart was better than his temper; and we have seen that he could enter into conversation with the daughter of Orsini. He felt no violent hatred for a female in affliction; and he was not sorry to find a person who could listen to his literary and historical remarks.

There was another point of which Gualtiero was nearly as tenacious, as of the preservation of the Florentine Republic in all its purity. This was the maintenance of the Latin language in all its splendid pre-eminence. He resisted the vernacular idioms of Europe, and the poetry of the Troubadours. He blamed the Emperor Frederick, though so long the polar star of the Ghibelines, for having used in his compositions what he

called the barbarous tongue and measure of the Occitanians;—"Plas me Caballer francis," was greeting to his ears, and he had as decided an aversion to a rhyme as to a Frenchman.

All who were not Italians were by him considered in the light of Goths, Celts, and Vandals of the early ages of our æra, though more or less to be disliked as they sustained or opposed the interests of the house of Anjou; and the Rubicon was with him still the boundary of civilization. He could not endure to hear the fifth vowel pronounced otherwise than *ou*, and though he might make some distinction between the inhabitants of Lombardy and the Ultramontains, he would have been ashamed to call them Italians.

Sciarra Colonna would sometimes say that he doubted whether even the states of Rome and Naples formed part of Gualtiero's map of civilized countries, which he believed to be confined to the twelve ancient Etruscan cities; for Gualtiero would talk of these with rapture, as forming the constellation of talent and learning whence religion, laws, and arts were communicated to the rest of Europe.

Next to the re-establishment of Tribunes of the people,⁽²²⁾ the favourite dream of Gualtiero was, as has been already said, the restoration of the Greek and Latin languages to general use in all their pristine purity; the sole difficulty in his mind being to which of the two the preference

should be given. He would himself have preferred the Greek on account of his beloved Etruscans, who were evidently the most ancient colonists of that nation; but still the language of Horace and Virgil, of Cicero and of Varro, was not to be rejected, and it had kept its ground in so many instances that the case was not hopeless.

Of Julius Cæsar he never spoke without a sigh, and he had been heard to say,—“What a pity that he should have made himself perpetual Dictator! For no man wrote better Latin; and, were he now living, the Gauls could not over-run our country.”

“Certainly not,” had been the answer of Sciarra Colonna on this occasion, “if he were still perpetual dictator; for then he could incorporate all the petty states in one great mass, and force it to rise against the common enemy.”

A reply of this sort would dissipate for the moment the airy visions of Gualtiero; and the dire necessity of existing circumstances would present itself to his mind. Independent republics with contending factions; Princes obliged to call in other Princes to aid them against discordant and rebellious subjects; partisans of foreign monarchs dividing the country with incessant warfare, all these were heterogeneous particles of which Plato himself could hardly have composed a free and powerful state. Yet would Gualtiero, after a few painful reflections, again revert to his

favourite dreams ; and without considering that discontent only excites confusion, and that the wish for unattainable good only prevents the enjoyment of actual blessings, he, amongst many others, wrote and talked so much against the present system of things, that the Pontiff thought himself justified in publishing more anathemas, and Charles of Anjou more oppressive edicts.

Most of the men of letters of those days were zealous republicans, but they had no armies at their disposal ; and the men, who had, chose to employ them for very different purposes.

The Condottieri, or chiefs of a mercenary band, who served one Prince against another, and sometimes joined the citizens of Florence, Lucca, or Pisa for similar purposes, were usually men of daring boldness, and military science ; when they had enriched themselves, they often became independent Princes, inferior only to the monarchs whose cause they had adopted, and founders of governments which ranked high amidst the states of Italy. They often countenanced the exiles or other discontented republicans, who could be of use to blow the coals of discord ; but when the flame had taken effect, and they had succeeded in their plans, they became shy of their assistants and advisers, for the very obvious reason that it could not be convenient to harbour in their states, men who were dreaming of Commonwealths while they were perfectly awake to

the charms of power, and the expediency of strengthening and extending their dominions.

The enemies of Sciarra Colonna, called him a Condettiere; but Gualtiero knew that he deserved a better title. He was incapable of adopting any cause but from motives which he considered as just and noble, and what he had once adopted he never deserted. Gualtiero therefore regretted that he could not inspire him with the desire, in his opinion, most natural to a Roman, that of re-establishing a government which, for so many centuries had given laws to the world; but Sciarra had no objection to the Pontific race, provided he might enjoy feudal power to the utmost extent of the word; and, above all, that the Pope should be of his own party, and that Ghibelines should have the ascendancy in all things. In those principles he had been educated, and he thought them consistent with the honour of his family, though in other respects the houses of Swabia and Anjou were equally indifferent to him.

Of little Sciarra the preceptor hoped to make something more classically correct; but his pupil was too young to take any particular interest in the disputes between the senate and people of Rome, though he could listen with great attention to the stories of Clebia and of Horatius Cocles. He had genius and facility of comprehension; remembered what he learned, and was impatient to learn more; but in the midst of a

long harangue on the tyranny of Tarquin and of the Decemvirs, he would sometimes start up, and, snatching his fairy sword, brandish it in the air, and vow vengeance on the Pope and Charles of Anjou.

CHAPTER XX.

CARDINAL CESARINI was indefatigable in his endeavours to pacify the offended Barons, and to put an end to their differences. It was generally believed that the hermit of Saint Angelo was earnest and unceasing in his solicitations on this subject, though he was never mentioned by the Cardinal ; but it was observed that he went more often than usual to Tivoli, and that he had long conferences with the excellent Bishop.

Massimo and Colonna being at Rome, the Cardinal proposed to Orsini and Manero, that they should meet him there, and he appointed a day for that purpose. He acquainted Massimo with what he had done, and met with no opposition on his part.

An agent from the king of Arragon ⁽²³⁾ was at that time in Rome, and both Sciarra and Massimo were deeply engaged in treating with him,

and in combining measures for attacking the kingdom of Naples. It was reported that young Conradine, before he received the fatal stroke, had thrown his glove amongst those who surrounded the scaffold, and had desired that whoever picked it up should carry it to his nearest relation as the investiture of the kingdom of Naples. Some added, in telling this story, that he had specified James of Arragon as the heir, and most were of opinion that a Spaniard present had assisted Truchses in obeying his commands; but no one knew who this Spaniard was, or whether he had escaped the vigilance of Charles.

Massimo wished much to ascertain the truth of this story, but Sciarra, impatient for the war, cared little for the basis on which it was to be founded.

“Is it not enough,” he said, “that Charles is an oppressive tyrant? and that, if we place the king of Arragon on the throne, we can tie him down to conditions? Shew me only the means of assailing this intruder, let us levy sufficient forces to meet him and his adherents fairly in the field, and I will ask no farther questions. Massimo or I have as good a right to the throne of the Sicilies as either of them; but, if we must have a foreigner so near us, there can be no doubt that it is best to have a creature of our own.”

It was in the midst of this conversation that the message of Cardinal Cesarini arrived. Massimo

assented to the proposal ; but Sciarra declared that, as he had no concern in the dispute, he would have none in the reconciliation. “ We have,” said he, “ far more important points to adjust. The affair is not mine ; but I advise you to settle it without loss of time, that your hands may be free for nobler strokes, and your steps unfettered for nobler pursuits. I will return to Palestrina, and visit my other castles ; make every preparation for our great enterprize, and rejoin you when your pacific conference shall be over.”

Massimo remonstrated ; but in vain. His nephew would not stay. “ Your Cardinal,” he said, “ will be a much better peace maker. I should only embroil the business ; and I wish it to be concluded ; for after all this Orsini seems to have given up the cause of Charles.”

The Arragonian happened to enter as Sciarra was making this observation, and, hearing of whom he was speaking, remarked that Orsini had contributed greatly to place Charles of Anjou on the throne : “ He,” said the Spaniard, “ with his young French crusader, did us more harm than all the other Pontific leaders.”

“ Say rather more good,” replied Sciarra, “ as far as your king is concerned ; for had not the victory at the lake of Celano been gained, the head of Conradine might still be on his shoulders, and his glove on his hand.”

The Spaniard knew not whether to take this speech in good or in evil part ; and Massimo after some private conference made no farther difficulty ; but suffered his nephew to depart, giving him letters for Beatrice, in which he informed her that he should avoid an interview with Orsini ; but accede to proposals for peace.

On Sciarra's arrival at Palestrina, he commenced the most active enrolment, and the city resounded with the noise of the armourers and of every trade connected with the war : the rattling of wheels and neighing of horses were heard continually, and the castle was soon filled with knights and squires from Pagliano, ⁽²⁴⁾ Genazzano, Zagarola, and other towns belonging to the house of Colonna. All enquired the cause of the armament, but no positive answer was given, and Sciarra communicated only to a few whom he could trust the hopes he entertained of another campaign against their old enemies.

Impatient for action they longed to see the banner displayed to public view, as an earnest of approaching warfare ; but as yet it reposed in a convent of monks near the centre of the city on an antique altar, which in pagan times had been that on which prophetic lots were drawn in the temple of fortune. ⁽²⁵⁾

This practice, not very consistent with the principles of sound philosophy and the christian religion, was with many other reliques of heathen

superstition, under new appellations, not wholly laid aside. Lines, or fragments of verses engraved on small oblong tablets of marble or ivory, were still used for the purposes of divination.

Virgil, as it is well known, was accounted a magician by many of his countrymen ; and others supposed him to be well acquainted with the Sybelline prophecies. It is not therefore surprising that his verses were more particularly applied to the above mentioned purpose, and that some faith was attached to their import in these times, as it had been in those of the Cæsars.

The clear understanding and buoyant spirits of Sciarra Colonna were not likely to be affected by the gloom of superstition ; and he was apt enough to turn every thing of this nature into ridicule. Gualtiero was never happier than when he was lashing with the energy of a Javinal, the follies or artifices of monks and friars ; and the popular superstitions of the lower classes ; but, as it has been maliciously said that there is a bribe for all men ; so it may be added that there is a ruling passion, which renders them accessible to the weakness of endeavouring to guess futurity ; or, at least, moments when an unrestrained will lays them open to this delusion, and induces them to seek their object beyond the limits prescribed by truth and reason.

Colonna met Gualtiero with young Sciarra, near the gate of the monastery where the banner was kept. He was asked many questions by the de-

lighted boy respecting the arms and habits of the assembled members, and earnestly entreated to repair to the place of which we have spoken.

“ Let me have one look at the beautiful pillar worked in gold,” said the child, “ and the laurels, and all that I saw when you came back from fighting.”

Colonna was never pleased at being reminded of an expedition from which he returned without victory ; yet he himself longed to see the banner once more displayed to make amends for the disappointment which his haughty spirit could but ill brook. He rather sharply told the child that he was too curious ; but took him by the hand, and with him and his preceptor entered the vestibule where the altar stood ; for the monks looking upon it as an implement of sorcery, had earnestly entreated the father of Sciarra who built their chapel, not to place it in a sanctuary.

Helmets, shields, and lances were hanging on the walls, in which were encrusted several ancient inscriptions in Greek and Latin. These attracted the attention of the Tuscan, as the arms did that of his pupil.

“ Unfurl the banner !” said Colonna to two of his soldiers who followed him, “ and let your young Lord examine it ! When I am no more,” continued he addressing the child, “ remember, Sciarra, thou must support the fame of this standard, and be a kind Lord to the men who are faithful to it.”

“No; no;” said the boy springing to his father’s neck, as he stooped to embrace him. “I hope I shall follow you and the banner together, and when I am as tall and as strong as you, we will not mind Charles of Anjou or the Pope.”

“I hope by that time,” replied the father, “we shall have a Pope of our own nation, who will know the value of Italy and of Italians.”

“If not,” said the child, “I will strike him with my gauntlet; ⁽²⁶⁾ and here is one fit for the purpose,” pointing as he spoke to some of the armour which he had been examining.

“This is not well,” said Colonna to the preceptor. “The head of the church is to be respected. If I oppose his councils in temporal matters, I will not allow the boy to talk in this manner.”

Gualtiero smiled, well aware of the encouragement which Colonna’s conversation, both in pleasantry and earnest, had given to remarks of this nature.

The banner was displayed and admired; but as the soldiers were about to furl and replace it on the altar, Gualtiero observed a vase filled with little tablets, such as we have described, standing near it. He began to examine them and said, “Here are curious devices; and no doubt many of them, when drawn, with the assistance of a little imagination, might seem apposite enough.”

“ Draw one, Gualtiero,” said the chief; “ we shall not be the more tempted to believe in their prophetic power.”

Gualtiero obeyed and drew.

“ Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.”(27)

Colonna smiled and exclaimed that Gualtiero had no doubt played false ; for it was the sentiment he always wished to inculcate.

“ Certainly ;” said the Tuscan ; “ and no one would be more capable than the Prince whom I am now addressing of raising, that government which gave laws to the world.”

“ No more of this,” said Colonna, half pleased and half severely, “ come Sciarra, draw me a tablet.”

The boy gladly obeyed ; but a gloom overspread the countenance of his father as he looked on it and read

“ Sed fortuna fuit.” (28)

Gualtiero appeared disconcerted ; but little Sciarra who at first understood but imperfectly the sense of the words, when it was explained to him said, “ I care not. When fortune left us, it was not my fault ; and you have always told me that it was better to deserve her than have her.”

Colonna’s eyes sparkled with delight, and he kissed the forehead of his son. “ This is a foolish waste of time,” he exclaimed ; “ however, I will draw my lot.”

He drew and read to himself,

“ Et nos cedamus amori.”

Throwing the tablet back into the vase he would not tell its device although entreated by Gualtiero and Sciarra. "It is all folly," he said, "let us leave this place for I have much to do."

They left it; but the impression made on the mind of Colonna was not easy to efface. He always despised love; that love at least which holds in subjection the soul, and has over it a dominion which Colonna disdained to acknowledge in aught that was mortal: he had been more forcibly struck by his first interview with Livia than he would own to himself. He had tried to avoid noticing her when she arrived at Palestrina; but the caresses lavished on her by his idolized boy attracted his attention; and he could not banish her from his thoughts.

His notions of the perfection of a woman were, as we have said, far removed from the character of Livia; but there was a dignity, a loftiness of spirit in her manner which he found very congenial to his disposition. He thought of her before her arrival at his castle; he thought of her at Rome and on his way back, and when he looked up at the residence of his ancestors before he ascended the hill, he was by no means sorry to recollect that she was one of its present inhabitants.

Still however he avoided her; but it was no longer because she was a daughter of Orsini; it was lest he should feel a great repugnance in suffering her to depart. This repugnance, which he began not only to feel but to understand, had per-

haps been one of the latent causes of his dislike to being present at the interview between the Lords of Ampiglione and Saracinesco ; but he knew not his own heart, and believed it not to be susceptible of a deep and lasting impression. The lot which he had drawn alarmed him ; and when he threw it back indignantly, he felt the arrow in his breast.

Livia in the meanwhile impatient of confinement, and daily more anxious for news of her family, remained almost stationary at the window, and beheld with dismay the warlike preparations. She heard the nailing of rivets, the call of soldiers, the sound of the trumpets, and the incessant trampling of horses. At night she saw torches hastily moving through the city ; she frequently heard the voice of Sciarra giving orders ; but the reason of all this was not explained to her : and since the return of the chief, neither the child nor Gualtiero had approached her. Beatrice indeed received from her lord intelligence that peace would probably be concluded between him and Octavio ; but she too was startled by the semblance of war, and knew not how to account for it, or how to comfort her unhappy companion, whose mind was too much agitated to permit her listening to the soothing though melancholy tones of Beatrice.

Livia's imagination was sometimes occupied with the beloved mansion of her father and of Seraphina ; sometimes with the hermitage of

Saint Angelo : and, as she sat for hours contemplating the waves of the Mediterranean, it wandered not unfrequently to the hero who had torn himself away from what was most dear to him. How bitterly did she then reproach herself for having been in great measure the cause of his absence.

To Beatrice she had disclosed all but her attachment to Lusignan ; and the matron felt her sorrows ; but she had nothing more to offer in consolation, nothing new to communicate, and the time passed heavily with little more than formal civility on the part of the Lady Constantia.

At length arrived a messenger from Massimo, informing Colonna and Beatrice that the interview between him and Octavio had taken place on the appointed day. He said the meeting had been painful to himself, and that all his wrongs had started up fresh to his remembrance ; that the sight of Orsini was as that of a serpent in his path, but that it could not be denied that his behaviour had been equally manly and courteous : that he had acknowledged the justice of Massimo's grief and resentment ; but disclaimed having had any share in the recent cause of his displeasure.

With respect to the restitution of his daughter, Massimo added that he was firm and decisive, declaring that he would consent to nothing more than a truce until she were restored to him ; and that as Andrea Manero had excused himself from

attending the meeting on the plea of sudden indisposition, he thought that nothing more could be done for the present, and that he must entreat his nephew to detain the hostage, promising that he would free him from the embarrassment as soon as he should see or hear from Manero, to whom he had written his positive determination on the subject; which was that the Lady should be sent back to her father.

Sciarria Colonna would have been better pleased with the despatches, had they been more decisive respecting the termination of what he thought an idle quarrel, excited, or at least exasperated and prolonged by the self-interested Manero. He could not blame Massimo for wishing to restore Livia, that a bar of that nature might not subsist to prevent a reconciliation. At the same time he liked not now to think of her departure; and whenever she appeared at the window or balcony he could not forbear watching her looks and motions.

Beatrice, happy in having it in her power to communicate good tidings, informed her of the letter which she had received, of the conference which had taken place, and of the resolution formed by Massimo to oblige Andrea Manero to consent to her return.

Livia thanked her for the information; but still complained of the delay, and of the deference shown to the will of Manero, whose interested

and crafty views, under the assumed pretence of illness, had, she was convinced, retarded the conclusion of the peace intentionally, and might perhaps throw fresh obstacles in the way. She however grew more cheerful in the hope that there would be no absolute renewel of hostilities, and she was highly gratified by the part which Octavio had acted.

Colonna's resolution of avoiding her began to fail him. He was not accustomed to control his inclinations—they amounted to being troublesome. He therefore threw himself in her way; and, availing himself of the intimacy which his son was always willing to renew when permitted to approach the fair guest, he would imitate a freedom, which however becoming in a child, was insufferable to Livia in the father. She treated this conduct with a proud reserve, which incensed Colonna without curing his passion.

Her situation was more than ever perplexing. The Lady Constantia, after hearing of the interview at Rome, behaved to her with somewhat more of urbanity; but it was cold and unfriendly. Beatrice as usual passed much of her time at her devotions; and Livia had no other resource for avoiding Colonna than wandering as far as the precincts of the gardens would allow when he was engaged in the castle by guests or business, and shutting herself up in her chamber when the company were disposed to walk.

Giovanna, who from Antonio received constant accounts of what passed at Saracinesco, began to think the affair of Mario wholly desperate, and she also observed the growing attachment of the Lord of Palestrina: she found means by her respectful and at the same time coquettish manner, to attract enough of his notice to be spoken to and asked questions. With apparent simplicity she contrived to give information of all her lady's movements, and wherever she was, or whithersoever she went, Colonna soon made his appearance.

She had not the slightest suspicion of Giovanna; and one evening having understood from her that Sciarra was gone to Valmontone, and would not return till the next morning, she remained in the gardens till the moon had risen above the cypresses which formed a majestic group on the side of the hill of San Pietro.

She was enjoying her solitary walk at a considerable distance from the palace, when, to her great surprise, she met the person whom she most sought to avoid. She immediately lowered her veil, which the heat of the weather had induced her to throw back; and with a cold salutation turned to regain the path leading to the castle.

"You shun me," said Colonna with as unconcerned an air as he could assume. "I flattered myself that you would be our visitor rather

than our hostage while you remained at Palestrina; but I see fair lady, this habitation is so irksome to your feelings, that all our endeavours to please you must be fruitless."

Livia stopped, and coldly answered "Neither as a visitant nor a hostage. I know the hatred of the house of Colonna towards that of Orsini, and a daughter of that house in my situation must consider herself as a prisoner, thankful for every misery which she escapes, and resigned to every hardship which she suffers."

"The fair daughter of the house of Orsini," replied Colonna, with a glance expressing more than his words, "would have no reason to include herself in the proscription, supposing that it existed, she might be sure of becoming the reverse of a captive."

Livia moved towards the returning path as she said, "I desire no exception from the common fate of my family."

"And yet," answered Sciarro gently detaining her, and as if not listening to her words "I have more cause to hate you than any other Orsini; for you are the only one whose chains I fear."

Livia felt deeply the insolence of this speech; and forgetting that silence would have been her best defence, she said "Had I chains at my disposal I would use them to restrain language which my real fetters constrain me to hear."

To protract the conversation was what Sciarra wished. "Come, come, you were not always thus cruel; but beauty, like years, must have its caprices. What fault did Pietro Manero commit to forfeit your favour? Those eyes have not always looked so sternly. They were formed for softer language."

Livia quickened her pace, notwithstanding the still detaining hand of her tormentor. Her eyes filled with tears of indignation, and she could only say, "A generous enemy would at least respect the sorrows which he could not, or would not, remove."

"Are your sorrows for an absent or a fallen love?" said Sciarra, "I could envy Manero in his tomb, if I thought he excited them."

"Manero!" exclaimed Livia with emphasis. "Is it possible that any one can suppose I ever entertained the slightest partiality for a Manero? Was not my rejection of Pietro the cause of all this misery?"

"Nay I mean not to offend you, Lady," replied Colonna. "Rumour indeed proclaimed that you had first approved and afterwards rejected Pietro Manero; but perhaps it spoke more justly when it gave your affections to one of royal race; and in that case, no wonder if you will not condescend to lavish one smile on the humble Lord of Palestrina."

As he spoke his countenance assumed an expression the very reverse of humility, and Livia's cheeks glowed painfully as the big tears rolled down them. His penetrative glance discovered them beneath her veil; for she stood in the broad moonlight of a cloudless evening. All confirmed his suspicions, and induced him to form an idea of her very different from that which Andrea Manero had sought to establish.

If she loved Lusignan, he thought there was cause enough for refusing Pietro; and she could not willingly have followed him. He felt that a change of behaviour towards her was necessary; but he found it difficult to new model himself; and a jealous pang shot through his bosom. Happily for him at this moment, and greatly to her relief, they were interrupted by the appearance of his mother and Beatrice.

The latter, having observed from her window that her nephew was walking with Livia, felt for her unprotected state, and requested the Lady Constantia to accompany her into the gardens.

Livia, confused, agitated, and indignant, blessed their fortunate arrival; and, after exchanging a few words with the Lady of the castle, took the arm of Beatrice, who conducted her to her apartment. She there related to her what had passed, and more earnestly than ever, with tears and entreaties, conjured her to write to Massimo, and

insist on her being immediately restored to her father.

She passed a sleepless night, impatient at her detention, and wounded by the freedom of manner with which she had been treated by Colonna. Little used to such treatment, she felt more than ever the loss of that protection which had secured her from all insult. She began to reflect on the haughty independence of spirit which she had hitherto thought sufficient to support her in the midst of all dangers and difficulties. She found how little it availed against the power of imperious circumstances, and how much it added to the pain of contending with them.

She opened her window; and the first object that met her eye was Colonna reviewing his warlike bands in the freshness of the morning. The glittering armour and waving plumage attracted her attention; and, had not her indignation against their chief possessed solely her mind, she must have looked with approbation on the majestic Baron, beside whom stood, like the smiling genius of Victory, his lovely and animated boy, who, from time to time, looked up to the open window in the hope of descrying his favourite.

Livia drew back in the fear that she might be perceived by him who had offended her. She was of a disposition to admire all that was great and noble; and her partiality for Lusignan had been excited by his eminent talents and virtues

Her powerful imagination was not to be attracted by secondary qualities, nor the delicacy of her taste contented with manners less chivalrous than those to which she had been accustomed. The Crusaders were perhaps not essentially more correct than the feudal barons, who had remained at home; but they returned with acquirements unknown to most of these; and with manners softened by the contact of various nations, and by the customs of the world with which they had mixed. To these advantages Lusignan added a rectitude of mind, and an integrity of principle, which rendered courtesy in him not merely, as it has been called, the image of virtue, but virtue itself in all its fairest forms, and in the splendour of energetic and decisive character.

CHAPTER XXI.

ANDREA MANERO, who had only wished to gain time until he could procure some intelligence from his grandson, began to be embarrassed as to the part which he had to act. Massimo's letter was written in a tone that completely put it out of his power to have recourse to farther expedients for delaying the required consent to the restitution of Livia. He perceived that he had involved himself in the web of his own artifices, and that Orsini was becoming daily more powerful.

He had no inclination to enter into the public disputes of Italy, although he had thrown out a lure of that nature to Massimo and others of the

Ghibeline party ; and he had no chance of being exempted from it, but by acceding at once to the terms proposed, signing articles of peace, and promising to remain, at least, neutral, should any new war break out in the country.

The day was therefore fixed for the return of Livia to the mansion of her father, and Manero saw, with pain and disappointment, that all his deep-wrought schemes had been rendered void by the headstrong impetuosity of one grandson, and the romantic melancholy of the other.

His enquiry at the monastery, where Placido was staying, was totally fruitless. Nothing had been heard of Mario in that retreat, and his steps had indeed followed a very different direction.

When he left the castle of Andrea, in the habit of a Palmer, he climbed the rocks, as was at first reported ; but soon after descended the mountain on which stood, like an eagle's nest, the town of Saracinesco, in a situation considered as impregnable. He pursued the path leading down to the Teverone, and then continued his journey along the bank, till he arrived at Nero's aqueduct,⁽³⁰⁾ which forms a bridge over this picturesque little river, confined and narrowed by the high impending rocks, and hoarsely murmuring, as if impatient of control ; while it descends as a torrent from its source, and breaks into foamy billows amidst the moss-clad frag-

ments of art and nature, which obstruct its progress.

Mario stopped to contemplate this awful and impressive scenery ; and he fixed his eyes on the grotto, where, it is said, that St. Benedict dashed from his hand the cup of poison offered to him by one of his faithless followers. “ Here will I dwell,” said he, “ here will I dash to earth the still more fatal poison of worldly cares and pleasures. Amongst these wild precipices will I wander unknown and forgotten ; and only join the pious anchorites when they assemble for their morning and evening orisons.”

The small chapel of Saint Cosimato, where the few brothers of this lonely convent met, was, at that moment, open ; and Mario performed his devotions. He then took possession of one of the caves in the rock, with the permission of the aged superior, who was pleased with his countenance and manners. He rendered himself useful to the community, if we may so call this assemblage of hermits, and he exchanged his pilgrim’s dress for the still coarser habit of their order.

No one suspected, for who indeed could suspect, that this was one of the gay, rich, and formidable Barons of Sabina ? If any of the anchorites had ever met the young lords of Saracinesco, they had scarcely ventured to observe their features ; and if they received from them

eleemosynary donations, retired as soon as possible, to avoid the sarcastic pleasantry with which they were accompanied.

Mario was therefore received without hesitation. Appearances were in his favour; and, if he had been guilty of faults, his penitence was not to be checked or rejected.

He worked in their rustic gardens, carried heavy loads of wood, which he cut in the neighbouring forest, by direction of the superior, accompanied on foot the patient beasts of burden, to ask charity of pious cottagers, and lived on harder fare than the most austere of the brethren.

The cave which he selected for his dwelling was near the summit of the rock: and it required all his agility, accustomed, as he was, from earliest youth to mountains and precipices, to ascend the fearful steep, almost perpendicular to the torrent rolling beneath, at a depth which could not be contemplated without dizzy horror.

This dreary abode, from which he descended, and to which he had to re-ascend, several times in the day, was only defended by a wicket, insufficient to secure it from the injuries of the weather; and its inmost recess alone could be considered as a place of shelter. On the summit of the rock arose many high and pointed cypresses; strong, yet bowing their sturdy trunks to the blasts, which, often accompanied by tre-

mendous thunder re-echoed through the caverns and clefts of the stony mansion.

The forest, on the opposite side of the aqueduct, was peopled with wolves, as in the days of Horace, who wishes his readers to believe that they fled from him when he sung his *Lalage* (31). That Mario's thoughts were less engrossed by them than by his Seraphina, may easily be surmised; for this solitude, this sublimity of nature, and the excitement of his mind, tended rather to increase than to subdue his passion.

Circumstances, totally unforeseen by him, occurred soon after to destroy the hope of tranquillity which he had so vainly nourished. Octavio, anxious that his castle of Ampiglione should be completely repaired, after the dangers occasioned by the seige, removed Julia and Seraphina to Cantalupo (32), between which place and Vicovara the convent of San Cosimato is situated. After his interview with Massimo, he went to Ampiglione to give directions, and rode thence to Cantalupo, where he found Julia displeased at not having been with him in the capital, and tired of the solitude which she had endured for a few days.

Seraphina welcomed her father with delight; and the hope of her sister being speedily restored excited in her a cheerfulness to which she had long been a stranger. Again Octavio complained

of receiving no letters from Livia ; and again Seraphina justified her from the charge of inconsistency ; while the paternal heart of Octavio prompted him not only to forgive the conduct which had been the source of so much evil, but to condemn himself for having so hastily acceded to the proposed treaty. His eyes were now open to the falsehood of Julia ; and the weakness of her stratagems was unveiled to him. He felt his honour concerned in not yielding to a woman who had availed herself of the facility of his temper to the detriment of his family.

His affairs now seemed to wear a more brilliant aspect than had been his lot since he returned first from Siria. The King of France was now gone on a new crusade, and Octavio would fain have joined in it, could he have left his home with prudence or propriety ; but his chief desire at present was to fortify his castles, and to pay off the remainder of his debt to Andrea Manero, for which he, in the mean time, gave exorbitant interest.

He was not, however, ignorant of the gathering storm that threatened the safety of Charles of Anjou. He had learned at Rome that the Spaniards were doing all in their power to excite it ; and he wished, if possible, to keep aloof from these disturbances ; but he knew the spirit of party to be so violent, that it would be very difficult for him to remain neuter, and, however he might

disapprove the severe measures employed by the new monarch of the Sicilies, to exterminate the house of Swabia and its partisans, he could not support the thought of abandoning the standard which he had followed, and still less that of joining its enemies.

Thus situated, he concluded that it would be most expedient to return to Rome, and observe what was going forward there. The absence and age of the Pontiff rendered every thing there precarious, and a Conclave would, of course, be more than ever productive of intrigue and anxiety.

This determination was enforced by a message which he received from Massimo, who, as soon as he had Manero's answer, with his reluctant consent to the return of Livia, informed Octavio of it; and acquainted him with his intention of conducting the Lady to the palace of Cardinal Cesarini, at Rome, where she should be at perfect liberty to place herself once more under the care of her natural protector. That day week was the time fixed by Massimo for the performance of this act of justice; and the joy of Seraphina, on being informed of it by her father, was beyond our powers of description.

She would willingly have accompanied him on this joyful expedition; but was soon convinced that it was more proper for her to remain at Cantalupo, and wait for the arrival of Livia.

She contentedly agreed to stay with her step-mother, although few things are less agreeable than to share the retirement of mortified vanity and disappointed ambition.

Seraphina would have been happy, if her contract with Mario had not still hung heavy on her mind. She had no positive dislike to the unhappy youth, and she felt for his sorrows. She wished she could soothe them; but there were moments in which, conscious of having sacrificed every thing to a principle of duty, she reproached herself for having given promises which interdicted her thinking of Lushignan.

She little knew, at that time, how near Mario was to her. Julia, incapable of tasting the beauty of the scenery, or of recurring to the recollections produced by it, seldom went beyond the boundaries of the palace and gardens of Cantalupo; and at length complained of ill health, and confined herself to her apartment; where Seraphina was constant in her attendance upon her.

Andrea Manero now gave out that his grandson was gone on a distant pilgrimage, in consequence of a vow, and that he would return in the course of a few days. Julia, with whom he still kept some correspondence, through the medium of Antonio, gave this information to Seraphina; and it was to her a disappointment; for

she had indulged the secret hope that the first intelligence of Mario might be that he had embraced a religious life in some monastery; and this last account seemed to put an end to the flattering illusion.

All these feelings and anxieties were confined to her own breast; for even with her faithful Vincenza she would not allow herself to enter into any conversation on the subject of Mario. She accompanied her one day to visit the child who had been placed under the care of Peppo and his wife at a cottage, nearly half way between Ampiglione and Cantalupo. No farther discovery had been made relative to this infant, who daily improved in strength and beauty. The only circumstance that seemed to throw a gleam of light on this mysterious affair, was a little shawl, in which the child was wrapped. It was finer than the rest of the habiliments, and worked with silk of various hues at the corners. It resembled those worn by the Saracen women; but was, at the same time, so like the handkerchiefs used by the Italian peasants, as head-dresses, and more especially by those who dwelt near the coast, that it could not afford a solution to the enigma; the woman, whom Anselmo and Isidore interred beneath the ruined monument, wore exactly the dress of the country people on the neighbouring mountains. Peppo, however, thought that the child might be of Saracen ex-

traction, and Anselmo approved of his being christened at the nearest church; which he was by the name of Angelo, in remembrance of his first asylum. The wife of Peppo remarked during the performance of this ceremony, an elderly man wrapped in a mantle, standing half concealed behind one of the columns of the aisle; but before she could make any farther remarks, the stranger had disappeared.

All this was told to Seraphina, who took pleasure in observing the fondness of the peasants for this nursling. She learned also with satisfaction that he was not neglected by Anselmo, who frequently came from Saint Angelo to see him. The good people were praised and rewarded; and taking leave of them and little Angelo, the kind Seraphina attended by Vincenza and two servants, mounted her horse to hasten back to Cantalupo.

Instead of taking the upper road by which they had gone to the cottage, they passed by San Cosimato, as Mario was on the point of entering the chapel for vespers.

The sensation produced in him by their sudden and unexpected appearance is not to be described. He was not recognised by the Lady or any of her party, for his hood was up and shaded his face; besides which he was so much altered in looks and appearance, that it was hardly possible that any one should recollect him: but far different was it with him in the remembrance of

features always present to his imagination, and now appearing to him more lovely than ever.

The glow of health was on the cheek of Seraphina, and a placid smile on her lips, as she stopped her palfrey, to order that a few pieces of money should be given as alms to the monastery, bowing gracefully at the same time to the friar, who, she supposed, had remained for that purpose on the steps of the chapel. Lost in contemplation of the object most dear to him, his present situation vanished from his memory, and when the servant, who had dismounted to obey his Lady's commands, approached him, he put back with his hand the proffered gift.

“For the souls in purgatory, reverend father,” said the man, “say a few masses for them who perished in the late war between us and the people of Saracinesco; they need your prayers; for they had short time for repentance.”

Mario took the alms with a convulsive grasp, and awoke from the deep reverie in which he had been plunged to all the horrors that first distracted his mind. He flew like an arrow into the church; and, throwing himself at the foot of the first altar, uttered repentant ejaculations, as if he had been committing the greatest of crimes by indulging himself in gazing at Seraphina.

When he had a little recovered himself, he

went to the Superior, and, giving him the money, entreated that enemies no less than friends might be included in their prayers. The Superior looked on this as a new subject of edification, and willingly granted the request.

The masses were said, and Mario prayed more fervently than ever for the soul of his brother : all his affections seemed to centre in the performance of these devotions ; and yet, when he heard that the Ladies of the Orsini family were residing so near the spot which he had chosen as an asylum, he could not forbear wandering on the neighbouring hills whence he could obtain a sight of the mansion, though he never ventured to approach it.

In the beautiful vallies beneath, watered by the rivulet now called Licenza, it was the delight of Seraphina to trace the vestiges of antiquity, and more especially all that had been described by Horace. With the beloved sister, who was now to be restored to her, she heard had many of his odes selected by Lusignan as the most moral, or the most descriptive of the natural beauties of the country. Here she could behold the mount Lucretilis, and recollect how often she had expressed the wish of visiting with him the scenes which in her infancy had excited her admiration, although wanting that interest they had since acquired from her acquaintance with the poet and with her instructor.

Octavio had often promised his daughters a visit to the valley of Tivoli, and also to these relics of the Sabine farm ; but it had been deferred from various trifling reasons, and Lusignan was now far distant.

Unassisted by her teacher, but not forgetful of what she had learned, she now sought the fountain of Blandusiam, and was pleased to find it still shaded by the favourite ilex. She seated herself beneath it, and while Vincenza was busily employed in collecting medicinal herbs and plants for the use of the poor, an occupation to her most interesting, and in her opinion much more useful than repeating verses to the lizards gliding amidst the ruins, and the brilliant flies sporting above the stream.

Yet was not the song of Seraphina of idle musing, of romantic imagination. Remembrances had forced themselves in her mind, and she sought consolation where alone she conceived it possible to obtain it.

“ Come resignation, heavenly maid !
Descend and grant thy suppliant aid !
O calm the tumults of my breast,
And give this heart a moment’s rest !

Inspired by thee, O let me raise
To that great Being endless praise ;
Who makes the humble flock his care,
And saves the soul from wild despair.

False hope depart with flattering voice !
And meek-eyed patience be my choice,
Until the long-expected day,
That frees me from this mortal clay,

Till then, O grant, whate'er I feel,
My secret anguish to conceal ;
Repress the sigh, the tear remove,
Nor blast the peace of those I love.

And when the hour of fate shall come,
And sorrow sleep beneath my tomb,
O then thy utmost care extend
To soothe a parent and a friend !”

This song had been composed by Seraphina in moments of sadness, and she felt, in her present frame of mind, some relief in uttering sentiments which she could not allow herself to manifest in any other manner. The hope, which she was anxious to relinquish as deceitful, was the possibility of not being obliged to fulfil her contract with Mario, and, if fulfilled, she could look forward to no happiness but in the grave.

Mario happened to be at no great distance from the fountain, and heard the song. He was attracted by the soft sounds of her well known voice, and, unseen, had listened to the words which gave him at once pain and pleasure.

“ What,” said he to himself, “ can be the sorrow of Seraphina ? Is not her father victorious ? Is she not the beloved idol of his soul ? Her sister

is indeed removed from her ; but with every probability of return. Why should she discard hope ?”

He would easily have solved the problem by supposing that she was, like himself, the victim of a hopeless attachment ; but he could not flatter himself with being the object of a sentiment so powerful. She had indeed consented to be his bride : she had given him the most sacred promises ; but what was the expression of her countenance at that moment ? Was it not that of calm and cold indifference ? What had always been her conduct towards him ? That of reserve and distant courtesy. O could he ever have flattered himself that her affections were his, no vow could have detached him from her ; no vow could have been pronounced, for to make her happy would have been his first, his most sacred duty ! It was thus that Mario reasoned as he slowly withdrew, and regained the road which led directly to his cell.

Arrived there, he contrived to resolve in his mind what he had heard, strove to recollect every sentence, every word of the song, the tone in which it was uttered, and the look with which it was accompanied. The more he reflected, the more he was tempted to yield to a faint, yet delusive, prospect of felicity.

He relaxed, however, nothing of the discipline to which he had condemned himself ; but

his ascetic life, so far from injuring his health, seemed perfectly to re-establish it; his steps became more elastic, and his sleep more calm and profound during the short time that he had allowed to pass in this temporary oblivion of care and sorrow.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE course of our history has compelled us to leave the reader long ignorant of the proceedings of Sir Guy de Lusignan, to which we shall now revert.

Having quitted the hermit, he joined his servant, who was waiting for him with his favourite horse and one on which he was himself mounted, on the road below the hill. This man was a Saracen, named Hamet, whom Lusignan had made prisoner in one of the engagements in Siria. He was gratefully attached to his master; for he had been wounded when he was taken, and Lusignan not only arrested the arm that would have dispatched him, but offered him liberty, which he declined, and begged to remain with the conqueror; for he was an orphan, and had received a

good education. Compelled to serve with a barbarous race of men to whom he was a stranger ; he had sought the first opportunity of escaping from companions so uncongenial, and from habits of life so opposite to those which in early childhood he had been taught to adopt. He promised to Lusignan a fidelity, which he amply testified on every subsequent occasion. All that he stipulated was that, if he served him well, he should never be abandoned ; and Lusignan would have thought he did him the greatest injustice if he had not allowed him to attend on him, and share his fortunes, in every change of place or of circumstances.

They passed rapidly through Tivoli, and over the Tusculan hill, and arrived at the magnificent lake which reflects the image of the Alban mountain.⁽³³⁾ Lusignan rested awhile in the town that bears its name ; and then pursued his journey through the myrtle groves and forest of Nettuno,⁽³⁴⁾ which brought him to Porto d'Anzo, the place of his intended embarkation. He was soon followed by the other servants, whom he had commanded to join him at this port with his arms and baggage ; and, finding a vessel ready to weigh anchor for Marseille, he allowed himself no time for unnecessary reflections, but went on board immediately with his few followers.

Conscious that the motive for his departure and the object of his voyage were equally just and

honourable, he was satisfied as to the expediency of the step that he was taking ; but he was by no means happy ; and looked back on the coast with a heavy heart, as if to bid a fond farewell to all whom he held most dear on earth. The wind not being positively fair it was long before they could clear the bay ; but the Captain was impatient to be gone, no less than his passengers ; for a great concourse of all nations was then assembled at Marseille, and in the adjacent harbours for the crusade, and much was to be gained by those who should arrive in time.

At length the vessel glided by the promontory of Circe, and caught a favourable breeze for taking a more direct course. The Captain, who, was a Neapolitan, chanted some lines of poetry, as he pointed to the vestiges of the temple of the Sun, still visible on the summit of the mount. He described the caverns beneath, where the waves of the sea, still pent up in a narrow space, and, as he said, agitated by subterraneous blasts, emitted sounds resembling the various cries and roarings of wild beasts, which he surmised might have given rise to the fabled transformations and confinement of the companions of Ulysses.

He had some reading, and more of traditional information ; he was intelligent, and willing to keep up the spirit of his passengers, many of whom augured ill of the weather, and looked with dismay at the rising clouds ; for they knew they

were in a difficult and dangerous coast ; and they began to repent of their impatience to be at sea.

The captain went on explaining all that was in sight, or might have been in sight, had the atmosphere been more clear. Lusignan absorbed by his own reflections, attended little to the conversation ; for his mind was not enough at liberty to think either of danger or enjoyment. He was looking stedfastly at the waves without knowing that he contemplated them ; and Hamet stood near him watching his countenance.

His attention however was called to a remark of the captain after the noise and bustle of tacking. " If we have sea room enough," said he cheerfully, " we have nothing to fear."

" Night is closing in fast," answered one of the passengers, " and there will not be a star visible. Of what use will be sea-room, or how shall we find it?"

" We have our oracle on board," replied the Captain. " We need not mind the stars now ; except indeed for telling our fortunes."

Lusignan drew nearer to him as he said this ; for he saw him take a light and examine attentively a small box, ⁽³⁵⁾ the contents of which he appeared to be regulating. Perceiving Sir Guy at his shoulder, he said, " Do you see this circular plate, and the letters round it ? These mark the principal points of the horizon whence the winds blow."

“And what means,” said Lusignan, “that needle which is tremulously vibrating?”

“That is our friend,” answered the Captain. “Look how he points to N. now that I have settled him; and there stops. How in this dark weather can we tell where the Polar Star is? And yet there he must be,” pointing as he spoke to the sky; “for my friend from Amalfi cannot be mistaken. Palinurus had no such oracle, and the foolish fellow, as he was star-gazing, tumbled into the sea.”

“That was because he fell asleep at his post,” said Lusignan.

“I grant it,” replied the Captain, “and many a greater man than he has done so since his time; but they knew nothing of navigation in those days. They were not come to the perfection of things as we are. Yet I laughed at this invention when I first heard of it. I have tried it now, and this is the second voyage I am making with it. There! Do you see? We leave the Pontine islands? We leave them to the south; and we have the coast of Italy to the east. No, no; I never intend to go to sea again without my friend from Amalfi.”

Lusignan had heard something of the wonderful discovery of the magnetic needle, as applied to the purposes of navigation; but he had not much attended to it; and he now looked at the compass with equal delight and astonish-

ment. He joined in the praises bestowed by the Captain on its inventor; and entered into conversation with the communicative seaman on various topics relative to his profession; after which they fell insensibly into the news of the day.

“You will find all the harbours of Provence filled with busy faces,” said the Captain. “The Crusaders will soon be collected; and the good King of France will keep close to his vow. The compass by which he steers is honesty, and his Polar Star is above. Our king, his brother, will join him; there is no doubt of that. He has a reason for all he does; but I suspect the others will run to leeward. Charles has many enemies, and some say he deserves them, but that is no business of mine.”

“Charles of Anjou does not fear them,” replied Lusignan; “for he is brave enough to meet the world in arms.”

“This world perhaps he may not fear,” said the Captain; “but methinks in his place I should be a little fearful how my reckoning might stand for the next. Nay, even in this, I should see the head of Conradine, or that of Frederick, stare me in the face at the point of every lance levelled against me.”

“What has that to do with the crusade?” said Lusignan rather gravely.

“I mean,” answered the seaman, “that the other kings will not much like to join him; and still less to fight for his advantage. They suspect that he only promotes the crusade for the purpose of guarding his new dominions; and I must say our country is tempting enough. He has a paradise here; and no wonder he is anxious to keep it; but why should they fight his battles?”

“My friend,” said Lusignan, “you seem very busy with the politics of Europe; but you have been almost talking treason; and to one who has fought in the wars of your country for the House of Anjou.”

“That is another thing,” replied the Captain, drily. “I am no traitor, Sir Knight; but seamen are apt to speak their mind;” and so saying he returned to his compass and rudder.

Lusignan was not willing to lose his conversation, which diverted his thoughts from the painful channel to which they had been confined. He renewed it by making some remarks on the weather; and then returned to the affairs of Naples, assuring the Captain that he took no farther interest in them than doing his duty; and that he fought under the banner of the Sovereign Pontiff.

“I have a great respect for the keys,”⁽³⁶⁾ said the Captain; “but I mind my navigation, and I have little to do with other matters. We cannot help hearing people talk; and if they speak a

language I understand, which it is hard if they do not, I cannot help remembering what they say."

"I shall not betray you," said Sir Guy, smiling; "but I would advise you to be more cautious."

"Nay," said the seaman, more on his guard, "it is not my interest to be an enemy to the crusaders; for, besides the pardons and indulgences, of which we rovers stand somewhat in need, they are a great help to trade and navigation. Our valiant pilgrims go out in sack-cloth and hair shirts, and they come back in silk and embroidery: they get kingdoms, and principalities, and countries, and we, who take them out, bring home sweepings of the gold and pearls of the east. Meanwhile all this stir and bustle keeps the Mediterranean alive; and people get their living honestly at the expense of the infidels. I, Sir Knight, was the first man who carried silk-worms to Marseille; (37) but I did not admire the thing; for they will make silk in Provence as well as we do at Naples: there is Charles of Anjou again.—All goes to Provence."

"You cannot blame him," said Lusignan, "for wishing to share with his native country the benefits acquired by his new states from their communication with the east."

"I am not blaming him, fair Sir," resumed the Captain, "I am only talking in the way of

trade and navigation. Silks sell better than worms; and perhaps these Frenchmen may learn to make fairer and finer silks than we do; and then ours will remain on our hands. Then we have fewer passengers, too, since the murder of Conradine;—I mean since the unhappy differences between our good king and the Germans. He might have cause for what he did. I do not say the contrary. I am obliged sometimes myself to punish a man; but, mark my words, Sir Knight, the good King of France will have no one to go with him; and, when he gets to the Holy Land, the King of Cyprus will send excuses, and the Greek will give him fair words, and——”

“You forget the King of England, my friend,” interrupted Lusignan.

“I know the English too,” said the talkative sailor: “they are as brave, and as hot-headed as you would wish a crusader to be; but they love dearly to quarrel with each other; and more especially with their king; and, if their king should say,—‘I will go to Palestine;’ they will say,—‘We will grant you no money to fit out your galleys and pay your men.’ No; if the English are to go, Henry must say that he cannot, and will not ask them; and then you will see them jump into the water, and swim like fish to Ptolemais.”

“You seem,” said Lusignan, “to have learned something of their mode of proceeding, for you speak very freely of their king and his affairs.”

“All in the way of trade and navigation, Sir,” repeated the Captain: “and to be sure the English understand these things; and moreover they pay well. You would think them the greatest misers in the world when they talk of the expenses of Henry and of his government; but they scruple not to give me what I ask for their passage; and I have seen them throw away an Abbot’s treasure on a race horse, or a blue-eyed Circassian; but in public affairs it is not so; why Prince Edmund, their king’s second son, might have been King of Naples if they would have given money to raise an army, and yet how their angels⁽³⁸⁾ fly when they get amongst us!”

“I cannot blame them,” said Sir Guy, “for not desiring foreign kingdoms, which would involve them in endless wars; and I confess, with all their faults, they have always been favourites with me; but I would have them know their own interest, and feel for their own dignity. Let them be united amongst themselves, and what nation shall stand higher in the world?”

“Wait a little,” exclaimed the Captain, “and you shall see what the Prince will do.”

“What Prince?” said Lusignan, “of whom are you speaking?”

“Of Prince Edward, to be sure,” answered the Captain; “of King Henry’s eldest son, who won the battle of Evesham, and keeps his father’s enemies in awe. I saw him when I was last at Barcelona, and he should be my Admiral, if I were to choose by looks: besides I have heard much about him; and when he is King, he will keep his people in breath, and make them friends with each other.”

While they were engaged in this conversation, they had to appreciate the value of the new invention; for the wind became boisterous, and blew violently from the south-west; so that, had they been obliged to keep near the coast, they would have found it very dangerous; whereas they were now not only safe, but their navigation favoured by the blast.

Lusignan, fatigued by the restless nights which he had passed of late, wrapped himself in his cloak, and fell into a profound sleep. When he arose, wakened by the rays of the sun breaking through the clouds that darkened the horizon, the Captain called him to observe an unusual agitation and derangement of the needle, which he had for some time been studying with particular attention, and had sagacity enough to discover the cause of this irregularity. They were passing the island of Elba; and he recollected the metallic substances with which it abounds.

The sky became more clear, and they saw the coast of Tuscany. "There," said the Captain, "is Port Ercole, and there Telamone; places at which the ship *Argo* touched." (39)

Lusignan was much interested by this remark; and his imagination pictured to itself Jason and his companions rowing in cadence to the sound of the lyre of Orpheus. He was pleased to find recorded by local tradition the names of heroes celebrated in earliest song. "We know not," said he, "how much there may be of fiction or of allegory in the fables of antiquity; but truth must have been their foundation; and what is the rational aim of all study but the discovery of truth? What else is durable? We yesterday passed the promontory which bears the name of Circe; but who or what she was we know not. We are told that Medea performed incantations with this her sister witch, when she was at that place with the Argonauts. A Circe therefore there must have been."

"And Circes still there are," exclaimed a Spanish Knight, whom the foregoing observation had roused from the silent thoughtfulness in which he had been plunged since he first came on board. "Circes, alas! are but too frequently found in our tempestuous voyage of life."

"Say you so, Don Alonzo?" cried the Captain, tempering with a low bow the familiarity of

his address. "I am sure you little heed them; and, as to myself, I fear them not, provided they conjure up no storms, and send us no foul weather."

"Fear their wiles and their artifices," returned the Spaniard.

"As to that," replied the Captain; "for I partly understand you, noble Sir, we may find Circes enough in every port; but from the time of Jason to the present, not forgetting Theseus, Ulysses, and the rest of them, we rovers of the sea treat them much in their own way. We make good cheer with them, and then say, Farewell, sorceress! hoist sail and depart." On this he showed a ring, adding "here is my device, which I recommend to all wandering knights."

On the ring was engraved a cupid, steering carefully his little bark, while dolphins were sporting around it on the waves. "This I found," continued he, "while at anchor in the bay of Corinth. So I thought it a good lesson for a seaman, and I sometimes repeat

"Though pleased to see the dolphins play
I mind my rudder and my way." (40)

"I am glad to find you a minstrel," said Lusignan.

"Any thing to drive away care," answered he, "a sailor ought to be a great philosopher,

or have a very light heart. Now, as I am not wise enough to be the former, I do what I can to have the latter."

"There is another resource," said Don Alonzo, "and the safest of all. A seaman cannot do better than learn the true intrepidity of a good conscience, and a firm reliance on Him who can say to the winds and the waves 'Be still!'"

The captain crossed himself, and a pause ensued, while the vessel glided through the dark blue waves of the Mediterranean: the Spaniard drew a book from his bosom and read, while Lusignan in a low voice joined the mariners in their morning hymn.

THE MARINER'S HYMN.

Lord of earth, of air, and sea!
Humbly let us bend to Thee!
Thou canst smooth the raging deep,
Thou canst lull the waves to sleep.
Lord of earth, of air, and sea,
Humbly let us bow to Thee!

When our vessel nears the rock,
Thou canst guard her from the shock;
Thou canst still the thunder's roll,
And th' unerring bolt control.
Lord of earth, of air and sea,
Humbly may we trust in Thee!

Thou canst snatch from waves and fire,
Thou canst calm contentious ire ;
Thou canst blunt the pirate's sword,
Thou canst nerve and strength afford.
Lord of earth, of air, and sea,
Humbly let us sue to Thee !

When in climes that life destroy,
Thou canst give us health and joy ;
Thou canst feed when hunger calls ;
Thou canst save when death appals !
Lord of earth, of air, and sea,
Humbly let us kneel to Thee !

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE day was fair, but so calm that the vessel made but little way until the evening breeze sprung up from the land. Every sail was then filled, and all seemed to promise a speedy termination of the voyage. The sun had set auspiciously, and stars innumerable adorned the hemisphere.

At the captain's request the Spaniard produced a copy of the astronomical tables composed by Alphonso, King of Arragon, that scientific monarch, who neglected state affairs to study the course of the planets and the position of the fixed stars; Lusignan listened attentively to the explanations given by Don Alonzo with great precision; for he had been, as he told them, a prisoner for several years among the Arabs, under

whose clear sky he had learned what he now explained to them, with the aid of these instructive tables.

He appeared to be about fifty years of age and naturally grave and thoughtful. Early misfortunes had increased the seriousness of his temper; which might have degenerated into gloom and moroseness, if he had not been truly pious; but it was a cast of mind that estranged him from all the pleasures of life.

His sense of duty was on a great scale, he was prompt to render essential services; but he could not bring himself to perform those minor acts of benevolence which so much contribute to sooth and brighten the existence of our fellow creatures.

As Lusignan conversed with him; or, it may rather be said, as he listened to his observations, he thought of his friend, the hermit of Saint Angelo; yet the more he listened, the more he remarked their difference of character.

It was evident that Don Alonzo had passed chiefly a contemplative life; and that, if he had ever been forced into action, it must have been contrary to his nature; whereas Anselmo must have been active from inclination as appeared even in his present situation from the whole tenor of his conduct.

Sir Guy thought of this; for he often thought of Anselmo; and he could not account for the

different circumstances in which these two men were placed. Why was the austere and reserved Spaniard traversing the world in a secular habit, and the animated Italian confined to a hermitage, secluding himself from the society which he was so capable of adorning? Still Lusignan was disposed to think that both were conscientious: and he therefore concluded that each must be at the post assigned him by the voice of duty: for in the mind of Lusignan there was so much candour as well as penetration, that he never suspected an unworthy motive for the actions of men, when he could attribute them to a better; and he possessed so much discernment of character that he was rarely mistaken in his conjectures. His curiosity with respect to the Spaniard was increased by the behaviour of the Captain, who seemed to know him well, and was yet reluctant to answer the most indifferent questions on that subject.

The following morning brought them within hail of the Genoese squadron.⁽⁴¹⁾ The splendid galleys glittering with burnished gold, and waving on high the vermilion cross on a field of the purest white, presented to the eye a brilliant spectacle; while the ear was gratified by the sound of warlike instruments.

Spinola, the Genoese admiral, made a signal for the Neapolitan to come on board, which he was unwilling to obey. Lusignan remonstrated

with him, and, perceiving that he felt some apprehensions, offered to accompany him, and at length persuaded him to go.

Spinola's object was to enquire when the Neapolitan fleet would be ready to sail, as his squadron was to join the crusade; but, before the Captain would return an answer, he and several of his officers recognized Sir Guy de Lusignan.

They had seen him formerly in Siria, and now received him with exultation, inviting him to join them in the crusade; for they had witnessed his early prowess, and were desirous of securing to the cause a champion of such importance as they considered Fortebraccio; more especially as they, like many others, doubted the sincerity of Charles; and knowing that Sir Guy had distinguished himself in the war of Naples, they feared his attachment to that standard might render him useless in the present instance.

Sir Guy, however, contented himself with thanking Spinola for his courtesy, and telling him that he might possibly be tempted to revisit Palestine; but added that he was now going to Marseille on concerns relative to his family.

After mutual civilities he took leave of the Admiral and his Knights, and returned to the vessel with the Captain, whose respect towards him was not a little increased by the reception which he had witnessed. As soon as he was on

board he said to Don Alonzo "I feared that I should have lost my passenger; for these proud republicans wanted to take possession of him. You see that he has resisted them and is not willing to serve so many sovereigns at once."

The Spaniard looked at the Captain with approbation, and at Lusignan with an enquiring eye, which escaped not his observation. He therefore coolly answered "I admire and respect the maritime republics of Genoa, Pisa, and Venice; but when I again serve it will be where duty calls. The Lusignans belong to Languedoc and Guyenne, and consequently are subjects of the Count of Toulouse and of the King of England. Lewis of France is my liege Lord; for he receives homage for both these states."

"Then why," asked the Spaniard, "did you join the banner of Charles?"

"Because," replied Lusignan, "I was an orphan, and found a second father in the noble Orsini, one of the chief leaders in the Roman army."

"In that case," said the Spaniard, "you take no personal interest in the affairs of Charles. They are, or ought to be, perfectly independent of the crusade now promulgated."

Sir Guy instead of making any answer to the foregoing observation, thought he had a right to question the stranger in his turn; and he asked him whither he meant to direct his steps after

their landing at Marseille? but he could obtain no positive reply, and forebore urging farther enquiry; for he could not help feeling veneration for Don Alonzo, though his austere gravity precluded intimacy.

Their voyage was on the whole very prosperous; and, as they approached the coast denominated by the Genoese (43) "*riviera di ponente*," for they came not in sight of the magnificent capital, Lusignan expressed his admiration of the beauty of the prospect, the various towns and villages on the shore, beneath hills covered with thick woods of olive trees, and the projecting rocks forming numberless little bays and recesses, within which fishing vessels and other small barks were at anchor.

The Captain explained every thing and spoke of names celebrated in history. "All appears enchantment," said Sir Guy. "How delightful it would be to wander on this lovely coast, and view these beautiful and famous cities!"

"Your curiosity would soon be satisfied," said the Captain; "for you would find nothing worth looking at near, though it all makes a good show at a distance."

"Such," said the Spaniard, "are the pursuits of this life. We seek fame and pleasure, and when we attain what we sought, we find rocky precipices, monotonous forests, and miserable dwellings!"

At length they came in sight of the islands and bay of Hieres.

“There,” said Don Alonzo,” (44) landed the King of France, after his imprisonment and long sufferings in his first crusade. I witnessed the enthusiastic joy of his subjects; for I was then about to seek the country he had left. I fled from sorrows, and I flew to chains.”

Again he was silent and became thoughtful; the wind freshened, and the Captain took his measures accordingly. “There will be a gale,” said the skilful seaman, “but we shall get into harbour before it becomes too violent. Old Tramountana (45) is coming out of her cave; but we shall escape.”

“Methinks,” said Lusignan, “there are other winds more formidable.”

“In this part of the Mediterranean,” replied the Captain, “she is feared by the bravest and the most experienced seaman. They call her the mother of the winds; and they have a sort of fable, or description of her and her children, which has been made into a ballad. I will sing it to you, if she does not give us too loud an accompaniment; and you may fancy her in any one of those deep caverns under the rocks. There, for example, with yonder solitary sea-fowl perched at the top, like a foreboder of evil.”

BALLAD OF THE PROVENÇAL MARINER. (46)

IN her cave with proud dominion,
Tramontana gazes round ;
Fluttering, shakes each snow-white pinion ;
Hail and sleet bedew the ground.

Piercing blasts and foaming billows
Howl about her chrystal throne,
While her lofty head she pillows
On the tempest-beaten stone.

Parent she of mighty rovers,
Who this azure sea deform ;
Boisterous winds, the direful movers
Of the hurricane and storm.

See Libeccio, lowly bending,
As the parent dame he greets ;
Tells of ruin wide extending :
Mournful wrecks, and scattered fleets.

“Well,” she cries, “I like thy story ;
Well, my child, thy task is done.
Fleets dispersed proclaim thy glory,
Wrecks, the treasures thou hast won.”

Next Scirocco, humbly flatters,
Cramps and langour in his train ;
Libian sands around he scatters
O'er the sickning land and main.

“Good,” exclaims the haughty mother,
“Well rewarded is my care ;
Rival of thy gallant brother,
Thou with him my fondness share.”

Zephyr comes ; but, scarce presuming,
 Lightly treads the awful cave,
 While his breath the space perfuming,
 Ripples o'er the murmuring wave.

“ Where, thou sluggard ! hast thou trifled ?
 Harsh she cries, in angry mood ;
 “ Where the squadrons thou hast rifled ?
 Where my hungry fishes' food ?

“ Wafting idlers, fanning beauties,
 Dancing o'er the setting sun :
 These are thy important duties ;
 These the trophies thou hast won.”

Thus exclaiming, see ! she rises,
 Sweeps athwart the sapphire sky ;
 Instant fate our coast surprises ;
 Flowers, and vines, and olives die !

“ Alas ! poor Zephyr !” said Lusignan ; these are not times for him to sport among the roses. There are not many who think like old Tramon-tana ; but are not so free to own it.”

They were now approaching Marseilles ; and the sailors, with joyful shouts and acclamations, hailed the land that saved them from a tremendous storm, which they were just in time to escape.

Groups of people, in various dresses, and with countenances not less diversified, were gathered together on the quay to watch their arrival ; and the Captain said, “ This may be called an epitome of the world ; for here you will find

assembled every nation of it ; or, at least, specimens of them.”

All the passengers, except the Spaniard, were impatient to get on shore ; but he, who during the voyage had always appeared anxiously and impatiently watching its progress, now remained on board, to the astonishment of Lusignan, who was more than ever induced to believe that there was some mystery in his proceedings.

Sir Guy had, however, at that moment thoughts of more importance to himself. He no sooner landed than he directed his steps to the abbey of Saint Victor.

This was a noble fabric, built on the vestiges of the temple of Apollo, and inhabited by monks, most of whom were descendants of the best families of Provence and the neighbouring states.

The agricultural pursuits of this order first restored cultivation to those countries, where it had been neglected by the listless inactivity of the inhabitants, whom the repeated invasions and oppressions of barbarous conquerors had completely discouraged. The monks were now employed in establishing schools and collecting libraries. A communication with Greece and Asia had given them the means of procuring manuscripts, which the novices were taught to copy ; and much of classic learning was thus preserved to posterity.

The abbot, Father Bertrand de Pontevez, received Lusignan with courtesy, but informed him that Philip was no longer a member of that community; nay more, that he was ignorant of his fate. He said that the zeal of the good man exceeded his strength, and that, not having much taste for their present occupations, he went to Toulouse, for the purpose of assisting in the establishment of a monastery of their order in that city.

During the first two years of his absence, the Abbot said that he had sometimes written to him for instructions, or to make report of the success of the new colony: but that much time had now elapsed without any news of him, save that he was gone on a pilgrimage, and that it was supposed he had extended it farther than was his intention when he quitted Languedoc. He might now be returned; but, at all events, it was the Abbot's opinion that Sir Guy would gain better information at Toulouse than he could give him.

Lusignan then asked if he had deposited any papers at Saint Victor, or had left any directions in case his nephew should apply for them. To this Bertrand replied that Father Philip had papers, of which he was very tenacious; but that he had taken them with him, and perhaps deposited them at his last place of residence, the Abbey of Saint Saturnine.

Lusignan, disappointed, and dissatisfied with imperfect accounts which he had received, re-

solved to lose no time in pursuing the only track pointed out to him. He wrote to Octavio and to Anselmo informing them of his arrival in Provence, and of his interview with the Abbot, as also of his intention to proceed farther in his researches.

END OF VOL I.

NOTES TO VOL. I.

1. THE leading events of the story are to be found in "Latium, or a description of the Compagna of Rome," under the head of Ampiglione; where they are compressed from a narrative given in one of the old topographical histories of that part of the country.

The tale, as it is here related, opens about the year 1269, and comprises many circumstances which took place between that period and the year 1272.

2. The first crusade, which forms the subject of Tasso's beautiful poem, placed Godfrey de Bouillon on the throne of Jerusalem in the eleventh century, and gave occasion to all the succeeding wars of this nature. Richard Cœur de Lion, of England, and Philip Augustus of France, were rivals rather than allies in the crusade which distinguished the latter part of the twelfth century. Lewis, the Ninth King of France of that

name, renowned throughout the world for his virtues, and canonized by the Church of Rome, was at the head of a crusade towards the middle of the thirteenth century, and commenced another twenty years afterwards.

3. There is something very peculiar in the mode of government of the patrimony of Saint Peter, unlike that of any other state ; as in the character of the inhabitants there is a singular mixture of the ancient and the modern, which distinguishes them not only from other nations, but also in many respects from other Italians.

CHAPTER I.

4. The hermitage of Saint Angelo stood near the spot where is now Castel Madama, a small town seated on an eminence, which is seen from the road between Tivoli and Vicovaro.

5. Italy has been infested by banditti in many periods of its history ; and it must be owned that this evil has chiefly proceeded from the persecution suffered by the natives from foreign invasion. Driven from their peaceful homes, and forced to take refuge with their families amidst the mountains, which form the long chain of the Apennines, the Italian peasants have in many instances taken to a life of desultory warfare, first in self-defence, and afterwards from habit and absence of social regulations. Before the approach of the invading army in 1797, the peasants of the Roman states appeared to be orderly and contented. The traveller passed in security, and the artis wandered without inquietude to delineate the scenery which is now become the theme of fearful narratives.

6. We are told that Andrea Manero proposed his two grandsons, Pietro and Mario, to Octavio Orsini for his two daughters, and that he was at first favourably received.

7. The aviaries and menageries of Ampiglione were equally splendid and curious. The Emperor Frederick the Second seems to have introduced these with many other luxuries into Southern Italy, after his return from the East.

CHAPTER II.

8. A description of Ampiglione is to be found in the works of those authors who have written on Latium and Sabina, and proves it to have been a fine city, with considerable buildings and gardens. Its ruins attest the beauty of its situation, distant from Rome about twenty-six miles.

9. The Orsini are known to be reckoned among the most ancient and most noble families in Europe. They, as well as the Colonnas and a few more, have authentic records of their possessions as far back as such documents can go; and it is generally supposed that they, the Massini, and some other proprietors of baronial estates in this neighbourhood, actually descend from the ancient Romans.

10. The first Lusignan who reigned in Cyprus was placed on the throne of that island by *Cœur de Lion*, and was succeeded by a long line of his posterity.

11. The history of the unfortunate Conradine, after his defeat at the lake of Celano, and the character of Charles of Anjou, so different from that of his brother Lewis, are too well known to require explanation.

12. Sciarra Colonna, Andrea Manero, Alessandro Massimo, and Cardinal Cesarini, are mentioned as cotemporaries of Octavio Orsini, in the History of Ampiglione, above cited.

CHAPTER IV.

13. Saint Cosimato, a monastery beyond Vicovaro, near which a great battle was fought between the inhabitants and the Saracen invaders, whose bones are still shewn to travellers.

14. This manner of ornamenting churches has been preserved in most parts of the south of Italy and Sicily. Nothing can exceed the taste in which it is done, and the poorest cottagers cultivate flowers for this purpose.

CHAPTER V.

15. The popular festivals in Italy, together with the dress of the peasants, as described in this chapter, have been transmitted down to the present time, and before the late troubles were still more gay and splendid than they now are.

16. The *Bear*, still the heraldic designation of Orsini.

17. The writer saw this game performed, some years ago, at Gensano, by young men of that little town and its neighbourhood. Much company was assembled in carriages, and at the windows of the palace of the Prince Cesarini, to view their dexterity.

18. An inscription expressive of this sentiment is to be found in the great hall of the palace of Prince Rospiglioso at Zagarola.

CHAPTER VI.

19. In most of the towns of the Papal dominions is a street called the *Corso*, where, as at Rome during Carnival, horses

run without riders. The race horses are called *Barberi*, as the best were supposed to come from the Moorish states in Africa.—*Arabians*.

CHAPTER XVI.

20. This appearance of a stag with the image on its head, as also the adventure in the chapel related in Chapter XIII, are traditional stories of this country.

CHAPTER XIX.

21. Palestrina, anciently Præneste, belonged to the Colonna family in very old times, was sold to the Barberini during the reign of Urban the 8th, but returned to its former masters by the marriage of the sole heiress of the Barbarini with Prince Sciarra Colonna in the eighteenth century.

22. This dream was in some measure realized in the ensuing century by Cola da Rienzi, who proclaimed himself Tribune of the people at Rome; which gave occasion to the verses addressed to him by Petrarch, beginning with “*Spirto gentil che quelle membra reggi;*” the ill use Rienzi made of his power soon put an end to the new republic, and things returned to their former channel.

CHAPTER XX.

23. James, King of Arragon, married Constance, the daughter of Manfred, and after the death of Conradine claimed in her right the kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

24. Pagliano is a fortress, Genazzano a walled town belonging to the Colonna, as did formerly Zagarola.

25. This altar is still preserved.
26. It is said that Sciarra executed this menace when he made the Pope his prisoner.
27. Æneid, book the Sixth.
28. Æneid, book the Seventh.
29. Virgil's Eclogues—*Gallas*.

CHAPTER XXI.

30. The aqueduct and bridge of Saint Cosimato date from the reign of Nero. Nothing can be more picturesque than the situation of this small convent, said to have been founded by Saint Benedict; of whom the anecdote of dashing the poison from his hand is related as having happened in one of the caves still to be seen here.

31. Horace—Ode beginning "Integer vitæ."

The forest was still infested by wolves not many years ago; for the friars used to warn travellers not to go alone and unarmed into it.

32. The palace of Cantalupo commands a very extensive view, comprising the mount Lucretitis, the river Digentia, now called Licenza, and the site of Horace's Sabine farm. The fountain of Blandusium is still to be seen.

Vicovaro, anciently *Vicus Varronis*, has also a palace, which enjoys a beautiful prospect of the hills on which stands *Saracinesco*, with other towns, &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

33. The lake of Castello, called anciently the Alban lake, on the borders of which are Castel Gandolfo with the Pope's

palace, the city of Albano, and the sublime Alban mountain, now called Monte Cavo.

34. *Nettuno*, a small maritime town which took its name from a celebrated temple of Neptune, held in great veneration by the ancient Roman mariners. It is about a mile distant from the harbour called Porto d'Anzo, formerly Antium.

35. The use of the compass dates from this period.

36. The keys, as emblems of the Papal power, are used in the arms and banners of the Church.

37. Papon, and other historians of Provence, tell us that Charles of Anjou was the first who introduced into that country the rearing of silk worms and silk manufactories, which were previously established in Italy from the communication with Siria.

38. Angels, a coin formerly so called in England.

39. Ship Argo; on board of which Jason with Hercules, Telamon, Orpheus, and other companions in arms, embarked for the conquest of the golden fleece.

40. There is a very pretty Greek epigram on this subject. The English was found in an old book of devices.

CHAPTER XXIII.

41. The Genoese republic was at this time very powerful; and their fleets made many conquests in distant countries.

43. On the western coast of the Genoese territories are Savona, Finale, Oneglia, Monaco, &c.

44. See Joinville's memoirs, and other historians.
45. The Italians call the north wind *Tramontana*. In Provence, where it is very formidable, and more especially in the gulph of Lyons, it is named the *Mistrun*.
46. This fable was heard by the writer, almost word for word, from the *Patron* of a felucca on a voyage from Toulon to Genoa.

THE END OF VOL. I

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